Country Communion Classes

ARTHUR LETHBRIDGE, M.A.

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COUNTRY COMMUNION CLASSES

Country Communion Classes

A SERIES OF OUTLINE ADDRESSES
FOR SERVICES OF
PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

BY
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WITH A PREFACE BY
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A. R. MOWBRAY & CO. LIMITED
LONDON : 34 Great Castle Street, Oxford Circus, W.
OXFORD : 106 S. Aldate's Street
1906

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PREFACE

It seldom happens that there are words quite ripe for the use of the Church which are not published. Rather, we are exhorting one another to produce something that may be useful. The sight, therefore, of a long row of beautiful note-books, full of material used through some thirty years for Communion Classes, has continually stirred in my mind a great desire to see their treasures extracted. The value of classes such as those for which these notes were made was one of the chief points in the teaching of that most practical of parish priests, Dean Butler.

Over and over again, men who have wished to follow his advice and bring their communicants together for preparation, have asked where they could find material for their addresses at the classes. To say that they will find it in the Bible does not, I fear, always satisfy them. Many men who work hard at the Bible as a help to their preaching have hardly realized that it ought to be the source of their preaching. And, if sermons tend to fail because they are not really born out of Scripture, much more is that true of such addresses as those which are needed for Communion Classes.

I venture to think that many of my brethren will be grateful to me for persuading the author

of the following pages to let them see what can be done by one who will go, as a believer in our LORD, and a faithful son of His Church, to find in the Scriptures the thoughts by which the soul is to be fed.

I ventured to say that I thought the contents of the note-books might be printed almost as they stood. If this has caused the outlines to be somewhat abrupt in style, and not such as can be read aloud exactly as they stand, there is a counterbalancing advantage in the exhibition of the way in which they have been put together. We are allowed to see not only the work, but the workshop.

We find in it convictions which belong to an English priest who always has the thought of the Universal Church before his mind. We find traces of the results which flow from a study of the Bible as distinct from a study of commentaries, and from the painstaking and fruitful investigation of the difficulties which such study must suggest. I should be prepared to find that some of those who value these notes will not agree with me in welcoming the element of mystical interpretation which they contain. The justification for this use of the Old Testament seems to me to lie very deep in the doctrine of the Second Adam, and the relation of the Eternal SON to all created things. Every king with his kingdom, every father with his family, every prophetic teacher with his disciples, seems to me to be a type of our LORD. We should not use the parabolic meaning of the Old Testament to establish doctrine; but when

some phrase or picture strikes the imagination as recalling and illuminating doctrine already received, we cannot forget that He Who inspired the Scriptures knows the way in which they enrich our thoughts, as He also knows the way in which comfort for the smallest and most individual sorrows is often found in the prepared words which meet us during the recitation of the Psalter. One other thing I must mention as belonging to this parochial workshop—the close knowledge of those to whom the addresses were given. Two causes at least have contributed to this knowledge—the habit of diligent visiting maintained for many years, and long perseverance in a particular sphere of work. I remember hearing Dr. Liddon once say that a priest never changes his work without incurring the danger that some plants may be torn up by the roots. I also remember his saying that if he had been a parish priest he would have made it his rule to visit from four to six hours daily. These recollections may be not unfitly recorded in connection with an attempt to do what lay very near his heart ; to place all the fruits of the Catholic revival within the reach of the rural poor.

V. S. S. C.

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Country Communion Classes

A Suggested Order of Service

Veni Creator

Our Father.

Act of Faith

O my God, I believe in Thee, Three Persons in One God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and I believe that Jesus Christ came down from heaven and died for me; and I believe all He teaches me by His Church, and by His Word. Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.

Act of Hope

O my God, I hope in Thee, to help me in all my troubles, to forgive me all my sins, and to bring me to Thee in heaven at last. O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded.

Act of Love

O my God, I desire to love Thee, with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; because Thou alone art perfectly good, and worthy of love; and because Jesus Christ died for me. O make me love Thee more and more, and my neighbour as Thou hast loved me.

Act of Contrition

O my God, I desire to hate and forsake, out of love for Thee, all sins by which I have ever offended Thee; and I firmly resolve, by Thy grace, to do the same no more, and to avoid all occasions of sin. Have mercy upon me, and help me to do this; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect for Whitsun Day; or for Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity

---

Address

Psalm, or selections from Psalms

(Kneeling)

Kyrie, and Our Father

Collects for particular graces, etc.

(e.g., "Let us pray for true penitence": Ash Wednesday Collect.)

Intercessions

(e.g., "Let us pray for the unity of the Church; Lord, hear our prayer." *R.* "And let our cry come unto Thee.")

Almighty God, Who hast promised to hear the petitions of them that ask in Thy Son's Name; We beseech Thee mercifully to incline Thine ears to us that have made now our prayers and supplications unto Thee; and grant, that those things, which we have faithfully asked according to Thy will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of Thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Act of Devotion

O my God, I am not mine own, but Thine; take me for Thine own, and make me in all things to do Thy holy will. O my God, I give myself to Thee, for joy or for sorrow, for sickness or for health, for life or for death, for time and for eternity. Make me and keep me Thine own; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing

I

Before Advent Sunday

Holy Communion, a Coming of Christ

Advent speaks to us of Christ's Comings. *S. Matt.* xxi. 5 ; *Isa.* lxii. 11.

Comes in many ways—

In Holy Scripture : "they are the swaddling clothes wherein Christ is wrapped up." —*S. Chrysostom.*

By His ministers : who come in *His* Name ; bear *His* message ; are stewards of *His* mysteries.

In troubles and trials : when He appears "in another form."

In Holy Communion : under the outward form of the Sacrament. Think of this coming under the form of three questions : Who comes ? to whom,—why,—does He come ?

I. Who comes to us in our Communion ? See *Isaiah* lxiii. 1.

a. None other than Jesus Himself : "the chiefest among ten thousand."

Very God and very Man. Who hid the Godhead in fleshly form: "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see." Who hides both Godhead and manhood under the outward forms of bread and wine:

> "In cruce latebat sola Deitas,
> At hic latet simul et humanitas."

He Who speaks of Himself thus, *S. John* vi. 48-51.

b. In the Sacrament He comes.

Invites us to come that He may come to us. "Come near to me, I pray you." "Come, eat of my bread," etc. *Prov.* ix. 5; *S. Matt.* xi. 28; *S. John* vi. 35.

In and through the Sacrament He comes. Words of Institution. *S. John* vi. 56; 1 *Cor.* x. 16. See Third Exhortation: "For then we spiritually," etc.

Even those who deny the Real Presence allow a presence in the faithful receiver.

So it is His specially appointed mode of coming with blessing to those who fulfil, 1 *S John* iii. 24; iv. 15, 16. They must also fulfil this command to Eat! Drink!—if they have opportunity.

So the answer to the first question is: He of Whose comings the Church bids us think now; Jesus, the Son of God; not perceived by the senses, but by faith; really, spiritually, coming to us.

II. To whom does He come?

a. "This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." "He is gone to be Guest with a man that is a sinner." World says this in scorn. It is our glory, our comfort, our joy, that JESUS comes to poor sinners, if penitent. His words and actions show this. *S. John* vi. 37. Accepts Mary Magdalene, Zacchæus. His Church contemplates only the Communion of *penitent sinners*. "What is required of those who come?" etc. *Catechism*. "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent," etc.

b. So JESUS comes in the Blessed Sacrament to sinners.

(i) Who know they are such. Any who have no sin to acknowledge must find their own way to heaven. *S. Matt.* ix. 13. Many acknowledge sinfulness, but not particular sins. But see 1 *S. John* i. 9.

So the need of self-examination; by the rule of GOD's will, the example of CHRIST. Conscience needs stirring up. "And that not lightly," etc. *First Exhortation*.

(ii) Who are sorry for their sins.

Must be some real true sorrow. *Psalm* xxxviii. 18. There is much false sorrow; Saul; Ahab. *Godly* sorrow, for the love of GOD, works repentance. It is a gift of GOD, to be prayed for, sought in meditation. Finds its expression in confession, and seeking absolution.

(iii) Who desire to put away their sins. "Steadfastly purposing," etc. So, who have begun to leave off what they *know* to be wrong, to try to do *known* duties. Important to *begin* amendment before Communion. *S. James* iv. 8.

(iv) To those who are weak and know it. "Out of weakness were made strong." Not to those certain never to fall, strong enough to stand alone. 1 *Kings* xix. 7 ff.

So the answer to the second question is, etc.

III. Why does He come?

Remember! "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

a. To give us that union with Himself, which is life. He is bone of our bone, etc. *Heb.* ii. 14. So He comes, that so entering into the bodies and souls of His worshippers, He may be entirely united to us—dwell in us—possess us.

b. To cleanse us of the stains of sin. Guilt not the only result of sin. *Isa.* vi. 6 ff. He is as the burning coal to us. "That our sinful bodies may be made clean," etc.

c. To heal our spiritual wounds. *Isa.* i. 5 ff.; *S. Luke* x. 34. Many an old wound gives pain at times. *S. Matt.* xxvi. 75.

d. To garrison our souls against the return of the enemy; so to strengthen us against attack. The heart left *empty* is in danger. *S. Matt.* xii. 44.

e. To prepare us against the Last Day. *S. John* vi. 54.

That we may be ready for the Judgment; adorned for the Bridegroom.

So here is the answer to the third question.

So in each good Communion He, our GOD, comes to us sinners, mighty to save. Shall we not prepare for—welcome—His approach? saying, "Amen! even so, come LORD JESUS!" "Be it unto me according to Thy word."

II

Before Advent Sunday

Holy Communion and Judgment

With the thought of God coming near to us is always connected the thought of judgment.

Man fears at the thought of God being close to him; because he is sinful; because God knows him. Adam hides because he hears the Voice of the One Who can judge him. Man, conscious of sin, must cry, "Enter not into judgment," etc.

I. Judgment connected with both Advents of Christ.

a. His first. "For judgment I am come," etc. *S. John* ix. 39. True, He says, "I came not to judge the world," etc., xii. 47. Not ἵνα κρίνω, but εἰς κρίμα. Judgment not the *purpose* of His first coming, but an inevitable *result*. All near Him were tried, shown as they were. See *S. Luke* ii. 34; 1 *S. Peter* ii. 6–8.

b. His second. The purpose, to judge; to make the final division. Then shall each

be revealed in his true character. *Rom.* xiv. 11 ff.

II. Holy Communion is an Advent of Christ. So it causes Judgment.

The fact of Jesus having given this Sacrament, —of its being carried on by the Church—of its being truly taught and administered in a parish, causes a judgment between man and man. Some come, some do not. But think of the judgment of the communicants themselves.

a. By God Himself. *Psalm* cxxxix. 1–3, 23 ff.

His eye judges each as he comes. Knows our daily life—our preparation for that Communion. So in His sight there may be a division among those that come; as even among the Twelve. *S. John* vi. 64; xiii. 10 ff. "Which being so divine and comfortable a thing," etc. *First Exhortation.*

b. By other people.

Everything is noticed in communicants; will be judged hardly.

Must not mind if our conscience is clear. Say *Psalm* xliii. 1. May be useful if it makes us careful, humble. Remember *Rom.* ii. 24.

c. By ourselves.

This we must do before coming. 1 *Cor.* xi. 28, 31.

Our own will has to decide whether, and when, we make our Communion. But must do so according to the conscience.

The conscience must be stirred up by prayer and self-examination. Each of us, before we come, must undergo the judgment of our conscience.

"Let a man *prove* himself." Neglect of this may cause terrible surprises after death!

Look well in Advent into your performance of this duty.

III. The Judgment of the Church.

Even when we have been careful about self-examination, etc., we may be in doubt about our fitness. Then we are to seek another judgment than our own: that of the Church, in the tribunal of penance.

a. The power of remitting and retaining sins, *S. John* xx. 23; *S. Matt.* xviii. 18, is, in one aspect, a power of judgment.

Its result, the unlocking or barring the gate of the kingdom of heaven; the power of the keys. To us now, practically, the power of admitting to, or repelling from, the Altar; the full privilege of the citizens of the kingdom of GOD. See 1 *Cor.* v. 3; 2 *Cor.* ii. 6, 7, 10.

b. Such is the teaching of our Church. See First Exhortation. "The way and means thereto is," etc. "If there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience," etc.

Much the same, though more strongly put, in Visitation Office.

So thus it comes to us; you desire communion with GOD through CHRIST: you know you must not come with sin unforgiven: you cannot make up your mind whether you ought to come or not. Then submit your case to the judgment of the Church, as represented by the priest.

c. Analogy of the case of the leper. See *S. Matt.* viii. 2, etc.; *S. Luke* xvii. 14.

For what purpose he was to go to the priest see *Levit.* xiii. Not for healing, but that the priest might pronounce him clean or unclean, perform certain ritual actions, and so restore him to the congregation.

We go to JESUS to be cleansed: He says to us by the disquiet of our conscience, "Go, show yourself to the priest"; if he pronounce you clean, give absolution, then you know yourself forgiven, you can claim your highest privilege as a member of the congregation of GOD.

d. This sentence the penitent may take as infallible, if he himself has fulfilled the conditions of examination of conscience—prayer for true contrition—truthfulness. "We do not anticipate the judgment of the LORD, further than that if He shall find the penitence of a sinner full and perfect, then He will ratify what has been determined by us. But if any one has deluded us by a pretended penitence, GOD, Who is not mocked, and Who looks into the heart of man, will judge concerning those whom we

have less fathomed, and the LORD will correct the sentence of His servants."—*S. Cyprian.*

For Advent Communion think specially of the judgment necessary before coming. Do not be satisfied without having the conscience duly roused, rightly quieted.

Come to your Communion pardoned through the precious Blood; absolved by the Church; at peace with GOD and man.

III

Before Advent Sunday

Holy Communion, a witness to Christ's Second Advent

The lesson of Advent : Christ has come, Christ is coming. Keep His Birthday ; look on to the end !

Many things should remind us of the end of this present world :—

(i) Day and night, winter and summer, etc. These things change ; the law and rule continue to the end. *Gen.* viii. 22.

(ii) The succession of Christ's ministers. He has sworn that line shall not fail. *S. Matt.* xxviii. 20. Think of your own priest ; he is one of that line that will not fail till Christ comes again.

(iii) The Holy Communion ; of all signs on earth to keep us in mind of the end this is the chief. It is to go on to the end, and then cease. So that at a Eucharist we may think this great service will be celebrated "till He come."

I. **Holy Communion is a reminder of our Lord's Return.**

a. Holy Scripture connects it with a second Advent. 1 *Cor.* xi. 26.

(i) "Ye do show the LORD'S Death"; proclaim it to GOD and man.

The old sacrifices showed it beforehand. Before GOD they proclaimed the sacrifice that was to be; fore-ordained from the foundation of the world. Before men, they held out a hope of a better sacrifice. The Christian Sacrifice is the Memorial of the one true Sacrifice of the true Lamb of GOD: shown before GOD, in heaven, *Rev.* v. 6, on earth, at the Altars of the Church: before men, giving us a thankful remembrance of His Death.

(ii) "Till He come." It shall never pass away while the world stands; like the manna in the wilderness for forty years.

Generations shall pass away; kingdoms, churches, rise and fall; customs, ritual, liturgies in unessential parts, change.

But still this holy Memorial of CHRIST crucified will continue to be offered; this holy Feast be partaken of in all parts of the Church, till the last Eucharist shall be celebrated, and JESUS shall come to end it.

b. Here, then, is something which does not change. If we be not wilfully unworthy we may find Him there always. It is the

Sacrament of love. Friends may fail; all look sad and gloomy; temptations be strong. JESUS in the Sacrament can be relief, comfort, strength. We can go to Him, or when unable He will come to us, up to our last Communion before our death, or His second coming.

c. So each Eucharist a reminder that the last is coming nearer.

See *S. Luke* xvii. 34-37. Christians of old seem to have understood this of what will happen about the Holy Communion. The eagle-spirited will be found about the Body.

So the Altar is an awful place! a figure of the judgment-seat of CHRIST. He is there with unerring eye; marking any that has not the wedding garment. Think of that when you come; He Who is there to save cannot but judge.

II. Holy Communion is a way to prepare for the Last Day.

a. JESUS tells us so. *S. John* vi. 54.

Thus we may become accustomed to His awful Presence; may have Him Who will judge us as Saviour and Friend.

b. Preparation for Holy Communion the same as for death and judgment.

1 *Cor.* xi. 31. "Judge therefore yourselves, brethren," etc. *Third Exhortation.* Examine, try, search your heart and life

b. Our death is a coming near of JESUS to the soul. "The Master is come, and calleth for thee"; and we must go, ready or not.

Holy Communion is the coming of the same JESUS to the soul; we go to Communion to meet our LORD and Judge; and we must go; but not till we have made ourselves ready.

So Holy Communion is as solemn as death; one thing makes death more solemn, that it is once for all; "once to die"; if we die badly it is for ever; of a bad Communion GOD might give us grace to repent.

c. So the preparation is the same.

(i) The immediate preparation. Cf. the First Exhortation, "The way and means thereto is," etc., with the Rubrics in Visitation Office.

Four heads in the latter: examination as to faith, repentance, charity, confession with a view to absolution. So for Communion, "Have a lively faith in GOD's mercy through CHRIST." "To examine your lives and conversations by the rule of GOD's commandments," etc. "And if ye shall perceive your offences," etc. "And because it is requisite," etc.

What the Church teaches us to do before death she also teaches us to do before Communion.

(ii) The constant preparation. May not have time and power for the above. So

the best preparation for a good death is a good life.

The best preparation for Communion, too, is a careful life : a daily effort to use the grace, to live up to the gift we have received ; a looking forward to the next Communion.

Remember each Communion we make may be our last.

II. Judgment.

The Judgment Day will be a great day of sifting, separation. *S. Matt.* xiii. 41-43, 49 ; xxv. 31-33. So it must be when JESUS comes sacramentally.

a. As we come to the Altar GOD judges us. He knows our life, our state of preparation. So in His sight there is a division among those who come. "Which being so divine and comfortable a thing," etc. *First Exhortation.* Some come away partakers of CHRIST, strengthened with the Bread of Life. Others, guilty of the Body and Blood of the LORD. 1 *Cor.* xi. 27-31.

b. Therefore the need to examine, to judge ourselves ; "and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with GOD." Be a stern judge of yourself before you come, that GOD may be able to judge you mercifully. If you cannot trust your own judgment at any time, go to your Parish Priest, or "to some other discreet and learned minister, and open your grief," etc.

III. Hell.

What connection *can* there be between the Sacrament which gives JESUS to us, and the eternal loss of GOD? Many would think of the word "damnation" in 1 *Cor.* xi. 29, repeated in Exhortations: "Increase your damnation"; "We eat and drink our own damnation." And though S. Paul's word is κρίμα, judgment, R.V., it is well to think that this sin, unrepented of, will surely lead to eternal condemnation. And wilfully bad Communions may make true repentance very hard. Judas, whether he received or not, is an awful warning against wilful unworthiness. "What maketh heaven, that maketh hell." Cf. 2 *Cor.* ii. 16; *S. Luke* ii. 34; *S. John* ix. 39.

IV. Heaven.

Here the connection seems natural.

a. Heaven is communion with JESUS, which lasts for ever and ever; no longer by means of a Sacrament, but with Him unveiled in His glory. When we make a good Communion we are as near to heaven as we can be on earth. We have communion with JESUS; and so with GOD; with His saints; with all who are in union with Him, living and departed. If careful about sin this is an abiding communion; "*dwelleth* in Me, and I in Him." We have begun the heavenly life; "*hath* eternal life."

b. It will not always *seem* like heaven. Fightings without, fears within.

But the worth of our Communions does not depend on our feelings.

"Peace I leave with you; *My* peace I give unto you." What kind of peace was His in His earthly life, on the Cross?

Sometimes when we can least feel the joy and peace of Communion there is the most real union with our LORD.

Remember, then, these things:—

1. Prepare for Communion as you would prepare for death.

2. Judge yourself carefully beforehand.

3. Think of the awfulness of receiving unworthily.

4. Come to Communion, and learn to love the thought of heaven, where you shall see JESUS, and have Him for ever.

That in the hour of death, and in the Day of Judgment, union with JESUS may be our hope and stay; that our lot may be not hell, but heaven.

V

Before Christmas Day

The Incarnation and the Holy Eucharist

S. Luke i. 34-38 ; *S. Matt.* i. 20 ff. ; *S. John* i. 14.

Place yourselves in thought a week before the first Christmas Day.

What had God already wrought in preparation for that ?

The Incarnation ; the being made flesh of the Son of God. The Nativity revealed this wondrous mystery.

"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," all one Article. Two separate mysteries, commemorated nine months apart. But one entails the other.

To consider the Incarnation now,

Will help us to prepare for Christmas, showing the reason we have to rejoice :

Will confirm our belief in the Blessed Sacrament :

Will give us thoughts about ourselves and our life as communicants.

I. The Incarnation and its bearing on the Holy Eucharist.

a. The doctrine. So little really grasped. So mightily important.

(i) GOD the SON exists from all eternity. *S. John* i. 1.

He took man's nature, flesh and blood, a reasonable soul, in the womb of Mary: taking flesh of her substance; joining to it a human soul: both being taken into the Godhead.

He was conceived, not, as all other children, in the natural way; but of a mother alone, by the supernatural working of GOD, "by the operation of the HOLY GHOST"; so that, though becoming a mother, she remained a maiden. That this, "the Incarnation," took place at a certain time, when Mary said, "Behold the handmaid," etc.

(ii) Result: that the Eternal SON took a new nature; the Blessed Virgin became the "Mother of GOD": her Son was and is both GOD and Man; "GOD of the substance of the FATHER," etc. *Athanasian Creed.*

Whether in Mary's womb, in her arms, in the carpenter's shop, on the Cross, at the FATHER's right hand, He is very and Eternal GOD, He is the Son of Mary.

This is the truth which, pondered deep in Mary's heart, prepared her for the sight of JESUS on earth.

b. This doctrine may help us about Holy Communion.

(i) Both are hard doctrines.

Men have always stumbled at the Incarnation ; all heresy tends towards the denial of it. So they have stumbled at the Sacrament of CHRIST's Body and Blood. *S John* vi. 60, etc. That bread and wine can be the Body and Blood of CHRIST ; that men should be required as a condition of life to eat His Flesh, etc. Many went back ; Judas doubted.

But he who believes in the Incarnation can believe this too. If GOD and man can be united in one Divine Person, shall we doubt that the same GOD can be among us under the outward forms of bread and wine ? If GOD the SON could become Man without ceasing to be GOD, cannot bread and wine become His Body and Blood without ceasing to be bread and wine ? If those two natures could be knit together, the HOLY GHOST using an earthly instrument, can He not unite us to GOD by a Sacrament, using earthly means ?

(ii) Both depend on the word of GOD, Who cannot lie. *S. Luke* i. 30, etc. ; *S. Matt.* xxvi. 26 ff. ; *S. John* vi. 51.

(iii) Both are performed by the power of the same Spirit. Mary said, " How shall this be ? " The Jews, in a different spirit, said, " How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat ? " The answer to both is the same ; *S. Luke* i. 35 ; *S. John* vi. 63.

So to understand, to meditate on the doctrine of the Incarnation may help us to a livelier faith in the Blessed Sacrament.

II. The Blessed Virgin and the Faithful Communicant.

Think of her, chosen by GOD for this tremendous purpose; none can share her peculiar blessing. But in our blessing as communicants we see a faint likeness of hers. Her life was

a. A life of peculiar union with GOD Incarnate.

(i) She bore Him within her, wherever she went, whatever she did. What thoughts were hers? See *The Blessed Sacrament, drawn from the writings of the Saints*, p. 49.

(ii) Have not we as communicants a peculiar union with our Incarnate GOD?—spiritual, but real. A union depending not on our feelings but on His word and power. We, too, are CHRIST-bearers. We, too, should be calm, stayed on GOD, joyous through the Gift we have received, humbled in the sense of our unworthiness.

b. A life of expectation.

(i) She looked forward to seeing the face of her Babe, that should be the Face of GOD Incarnate. See Faber's *Bethlehem*, p. 103 ff.

(ii) So our life should be a looking forward to something better even than the Sacramental Presence of JESUS within us. We can never thank GOD enough for that. But we hope to see the Face of JESUS in Paradise, the

Beatific Vision in heaven. To live this life of expectation is to "love His appearing." 2 *Tim.* iv. 8.

Think, then !

In your preparation, of the Incarnation, that you may come to your Communion in fullness of faith, believing that the Holy Child is there present, that you receive Him.

After your Communion, remember the likeness between yourself and the Blessed Virgin at that time ; live and move among men with a sense of the awful nearness of GOD.

Say the Magnificat during Christmas week as an act of thanksgiving.

VI

Before Christmas Day

Bethlehem

One spot on earth to which the hearts of all Christians turn at Christmas. Bethlehem, the little town on the hill, and the fields round. There have been many wonderful scenes on earth ; but none stranger than Mary and Joseph and the unborn Babe seeking a lodging there that night. The world was busy ; nobody had room ; so they sought shelter in the cave. And there, while the world went on as usual, the Eternal Word was born of the Virgin Mary. Micah's prophecy was fulfilled : v. 2. Bethlehem, house of bread, had justified its name, for He Who is born there is the Bread that came down from heaven. Ephratah, fruitful, for He is the Fruitful Vine.

I. The Altar is our Bethlehem.

There the Son of God was to be found by those who sought Him. So here Jesus, the true Bread, is to be found in the Blessed Sacrament by those who have faith to seek Him. Faith alone can find Him.

God hid Himself wondrously in the manger. So He does in the Blessed Sacrament ; bread and wine are all we see.

Bethlehem was a little place, not reckoned when they counted the thousands of Judah. But out of Bethlehem came He Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. So what does the world think of the Altars of the Church? The Altar is despised ; the Sacrament neglected. Yet from there He comes forth to His faithful people to be their spiritual Food and Sustenance.

The same spirit, the simple faith of the shepherds, the self-sacrificing seeking after God of the Magi, will bring us to the Altar at Christmas to find and worship Jesus.

II. Chief things in the history of Bethlehem.

In these we may find parables about our house of bread.

a. In connection with the death of Rachel. *Gen.* xxxv. 16-20.

She was Jacob's best-loved wife ; the one he had passionately desired ; not the one in the line of our Lord. Her death a great sorrow, long remembered ; xlviii. 7. So the way to Bethlehem becomes a way of sorrow to Jacob, who represents the pilgrim of this world. There he buries natural affection. But Benjamin is given to him. So as regards our Bethlehem.

(i) On the way to the Altar there must be sorrow, the sorrow of true repentance.

Godly sorrow ; 2 *Cor.* vii. 10 ; after the pattern of that in Gethsemane. Be careful to constantly pray for increased contrition.

(ii) Thither we must bring what most we love on earth, and there we may have to leave it. For at the Altar we profess to give ourselves wholly to GOD ; "here we offer and present unto Thee," etc. Must be poor in spirit, i.e., *willing* to give up all to GOD. There must be the grave of all desires that we cannot ask GOD to bless. Bring them to Him there, and see what you think of them.

(iii) There GOD will give us better than what we lose. GOD gives us there His Benjamin, the SON of His right hand, even JESUS ; and how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things ? In return for our sorrow on the way, we have the joy of possessing the SON.

b. The scene of the story of Ruth.

To Bethlehem in harvest time came Ruth, the Moabitess ; there she met with Boaz, type of the Bridegroom, who succoured her, and took her as his wife ; and she became a mother of our LORD. *S. Matt.* i. 5.

(i) The soul must come out of the world, 2 *Cor.* vi. 17 ff. ; *Ps.* xlv. 11, in order to come to the Altar, the House of Bread. Remember Ruth's words ; i. 16 ff. Must be ready to throw ourselves on GOD in confidence ; ii. 12.

(ii) As she there found her husband, so does the faithful soul at the Altar find union with

the heavenly Bridegroom. He becomes to us our Boaz, our Strength. *Eph.* v. 32.

c. The city of David, the town where David was.

His birthplace and home ; yet he had to leave it. So we cannot stay in our House of Bread always. Must go forth as David did.

(i) To fight the giant. 1 *Sam.* xvii.

So we go forth from Communion to fight against sin ; *Ps.* xxxviii. 19, especially against the giant, our besetting sin. "When the Philistines saw their champion was dead they fled." Not only once, but often, did David have to fight the Philistines.

(ii) To charm away the evil spirit from Saul. 1 *Sam.* xvi. 23.

We must go forth to try to help others against evil. Every one in whom is the Spirit of God may do something to drive away evil spirits. *S. Mark* xvi. 17.

(iii) To face Saul's persecution. Instead of the quiet home, to be hunted like a partridge on the mountains. As Jesus to Egypt.

Blessed are they that are persecuted, etc. We must expect this, face it, accept it. It is the communicant's share of the Cross.

(iv) To be king over God's people ; i.e., to do the work to which God called him. *Ps.* lxxviii. 71 ff. We have not only sin to fight, trouble to bear, but also a work to do for God and men. To be absorbed in loving service to God and man is a great safeguard against falling into sin.

Bethlehem, then, may make us think of such things.

Blessed it were to go to Bethlehem, to enter that chapel of the Nativity. But more blessed to draw near to our Altar on Christmas morning! Remember! sorrow on the way thither: surrender of all to God there: union found there with God made Man: going forth from there to fight, to help the weak, to endure, to work!

All in the strength of Him Who for our sakes became a helpless Babe!

VII

Before Christmas Day

Birthday Gifts to our Lord

S. Matt. ii. 11 ; *S. Luke* ii. 7, 13-17.

We are preparing to keep the Birthday of our King.

Naturally we should desire to bring Him presents. Communicants can do this in the best and highest way.

Remember how He was treated by various people when He was born.

A likeness of how it is when He comes all lowly in the Holy Eucharist.

I. There were many near Him who brought Him no presents. 1 *Sam.* x. 27.

Do not forget those who do not join with us at the Altar.

a. The Bethlehemites. No room in lodging or inn. Too busy to take any notice of what the shepherds told them.

Are any here too busy, receiving friends, etc., to make their Christmas Communion ?

b. The Jews of Jerusalem, who knew of the coming of the Magi ; would not trouble, or feared, to enquire.

Like those who do not really want to do what is right.

c. Herod who desired to slay the young child.

Like those who oppose, blaspheme. hinder.

Beware of being among these, or fearing them.

Pray for them, that they may come and worship the young Child too.

II **There were many who did bring good presents to the Son of God.**

a. The Angels. Gave Him their worship. When the great humiliation of the Son of God was mentioned by the herald angel, *S. Luke* ii. 12, at once they break forth into *Gloria in Excelsis.* See *Heb.* i. 6. Their example no doubt followed by all.

Reminds us that worship must be a Christmas present from us.

Wherever Jesus is He must be worshipped. Is present in the Holy Eucharist ; so we must worship Him there. He came on earth, not for the purpose of being worshipped ; but being here, when recognized, He received worship. So in the Holy Eucharist, He is adored.

Come, then, to Christmas Communion, not

only to get good, but to give the present of worship in the spirit to your King.

b. The Shepherds. The special thing they gave Him was their help to make Him known. An angel proclaimed it to them; they to others.

Make known to others the Child of Bethlehem; by your life, e.g., by your conduct in Christmastide: by some work done for Him: by word when you have opportunity.

c. The Wise Men.

They brought not only their worship, but gifts, which have a meaning in their fitness for Him Who is King, God, Man. But also show wherewith we must come before Him in this Holy Sacrament.

(i) Myrrh. From its bitterness a type of penitence. *Cant.* iv. 6. Type of Mount Calvary where penitence and prayer in perfection were offered for us.

We must come to Christ on His birthday with the gift of an accomplished penitence. Not a *perfect* penitence; for who will have that before he sees the Face of Jesus? But accomplished, according to the way and means taught us by the Church.

(ii) Frankincense. Type of prayer. *Ps.* cxli. 2; *Rev.* viii. 4.

Come to Communion, after much prayer for fitness; with much prayer for self and others, e.g., for the right keeping of Christmas in England.

(iii) Gold. Type of the most precious gift of all, our love.

Love to Him "Who for us men, and for our salvation," etc. Love which shows itself in action, devotion.

Love to others. "On earth peace," which cannot be without love. Bring all disputes, dislikes, etc., and throw them down before Him.

d. S. Joseph. The guardian, the foster-father of the Holy Child.

He brings his earnest loving care of Child and Mother.

Teaches us what we must give to JESUS after we have received Him.

He commits Himself to us; we must guard His Presence in us.

Watchfulness; be on our guard. So many enemies there are to the Presence of JESUS. Remember *S. Luke* xxii. 31.

Recollection; could S. Joseph forget his office? Try to be recollected on a Communion day. Recall your Communion to your mind again and again.

e. The Blessed Virgin. The highest last.

She gave Him a mother's love, and all that is meant by that.

How privileged was she, to feed the Bread of Life! With what reverent tenderness did she treat her Child, Who is her GOD!

What can we give Him like this? See *S. Mark* iii. 35. We may give to Him the

sacrifice of our own will, that we may do the will of His FATHER. To him who gives Him this JESUS says, "The same is My mother!"

So let each think what present he can bring to JESUS.

Angels. None so high but they must bend before this Child.

Shepherds. None so low but they have a work to do for Him.

Magi. None so far off but they may come to know Him, if they come with penitence, prayer, and love.

S. Joseph. None so near but they must take care.

S. Mary. None so highly favoured but we may be like them by the power of the HOLY GHOST, through union with JESUS.

Pray to Him to give you the gifts that you want to give to Him on His Birthday.

VIII

Before Christmas Day

The Presence of Christ the Joy of His Church

Psalm cxxxii.

In this Christmas Psalm are many thoughts for Holy Communion as well as for Christmas; things indeed which only good communicants can fully say.

Take it in preparation for Christmas Communion.

I. The desire of Christ to make mankind the temple of God. 1-5.

(In the Psalm throughout are two meanings; concerning David; concerning David's royal Son and Lord. Take only the latter.)

a. "Lord, remember David," etc. 1.

In our mouths may mean, Call to mind the affliction of Jesus. "Trouble," the same word as in *Isa*. liii. 4. Remember all He went through for us; the abasement of the Incarnation; of the Passion.

This is one great purpose of the Holy Eucharist, to put GOD in remembrance of what JESUS did, bore, for us; to plead before the FATHER the Sacrifice of His SON. All this came upon Him because

b. "He sware unto the LORD," etc. 2-5.

He sware when He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD," when the Incarnation was determined on.

(i) One purpose of the Incarnation that GOD may dwell in men: *vv.* 5, 15.

The forgiveness of sins not the chief purpose of His coming; would perhaps have come though man had not sinned. But union between GOD and man, through personal contact with our LORD. S. Paul, referring to a prophecy, speaks of it as accomplished. 2 *Cor.* vi. 16; 1 *Cor.* iii. 16. We are His house and temple. *Eph.* ii. 21 ff.

(ii) So we may put these words into the mouth of JESUS.

"I will not come," etc. Having left His FATHER'S side, He will not return thither, until etc. "Proceeds as far as very hell," before He "speeds back to light ineffable." *Ps.* xix. 5 ff.

"I will not suffer mine eyes to sleep," etc. JESUS had nowhere to lay His head, no leisure so much as to eat; His meat to do the FATHER'S will; "How am I straitened till it be accomplished." Not till He had done that which would enable sinful man to

become a temple of the LORD, an habitation of the mighty GOD of Jacob, did He ascend into heaven.

II. The place where this dwelling is to be found, etc. 6-10.

a. "Lo, we heard of the same at Ephratah," Bethlehem. *Mic.* v. 2.

There we have heard of the possibility of GOD dwelling in man; there we see the wondrous Child; we hear of His miraculous Conception; the angels say that this is the Saviour; of Whom it was foretold that He shall be Emmanuel, GOD with us.

"And found it in the wood," even in the Cross. For then was His Body given, broken, for us; then became possible the Sacrament by which He dwells in us.

So in the Christmas scene, at Bethlehem, we see the union of GOD with man in that Child, the Second Adam. In Holy Communion, which comes to us from the death of CHRIST, we have the Sacrament by means of which GOD'S promise, CHRIST'S wish, can be fulfilled in us; for in the devout communicant GOD is dwelling. This is our House of Bread.

b. So follows naturally, "We will go into His tabernacle," etc.

We will go, like the shepherds, at Christmas where His special Presence is to be

found. We will "fall low," etc. O come, let us adore Him!

The more because He comes to us lowly; Glory to GOD in the highest.

c. What follows may well be our prayer beforehand. "Arise, O LORD," etc.

Let the celebrant be clothed, not only in the white vestments, but in Thy righteousness; let all who come be joyful with the sense of sin forgiven. For Thy servant David's sake, turn not back the face of Thine Anointed. "To 'turn back a person's face' is to dismiss him with his petition refused." (Dr. Kay, *in loc.*) So it is, Refuse not what CHRIST pleads for us in the Holy Eucharist.

III. The fulfilling of the promise of God. 11-13.

a. Of the fruit of Thy Body, etc. This promise, made to CHRIST, is repeated by Him to His servants: *S. Matt.* xix. 28; but not only to Apostles; to every one that overcometh; *Rev.* iii. 21.

And every one that overcometh is the fruit of the Body of CHRIST. "He shall see His seed." "I will raise him up at the last day." If we gain this glorious portion it will be by our union with GOD, through CHRIST'S human nature.

b. But there is a condition attached. "If thy children will keep My covenant," etc.

His covenant with us about Communion is that we should not come in unforgiven sin ; same as conditions of baptismal covenant.

Expressed in Church's teaching, "Repent . . . or else come not."

His testimonies are His commandments ; and keeping the commandments is as much a condition of union with Him as eating His Flesh, etc. 1 *S. John* iii. 24. It is *keeping* His testimonies ; not letting them go, though we often fail. Must be like David's servants ; 2 *Sam.* xv. 15.

IV. The longing of God to dwell in us. 14-15.

What is said of Sion, the Church, is said of individual members.

If you have come rightly to Communion, it is God that hath chosen you to be an habitation for Himself ; for He has made your body,—your soul,—what it is. He delights to come to us ; *Prov.* viii. 31. How wonderful that God should care !

This puts our Communions in the true light. Not just for our own sakes, our own pleasure, but for the glory of God. For His sake we ought to come. If we stop away it is not only our own loss. We are disappointing our God. I will not sin lest I have to do this : I will make my repentance thorough ; I will not remain out of charity, etc.

V. The promises to those who come rightly. 16-19.

"I will bless her victuals," etc. For the benefit of this Food shall increase to those who use it rightly. It alone can satisfy the poor in spirit.

"I will deck her priests," etc. The answer to the prayer in *v.* 9.

"There shall I make the horn," etc. The horn of strength, the lantern of guidance to the feet; strength and guidance.

"As for his enemies," etc. The enemies of the soul overthrown; for him the crown that fadeth not away. Such shall be the results of good Communions.

And so, Glory be to the FATHER, etc.

IX

Before Christmas Day

The Doubts and the Faith of S. Thomas

S. John xx. 24-29.

The Apostle Thomas often called "The doubting Apostle." An instance of how we remember people's faults rather than their virtues. Just the same in the case of S. Peter, e.g., *S. Matt.* xiv. 28-31. We remember his faith failing, but forget the great faith needed to enable him to walk on the water at all.

Better to call S. Thomas "The Apostle who overcame his doubts." It was indeed by *sight* that he gained full faith ; but he believed more than he could see : "My Lord and my God!"

His doubtfulness, and the way he came to faith, may help us for our Christmas Communion.

I. The doubts of Christ's people.

a. S. Thomas believed in his Master as Messiah. Christ's death had upset him, shaken his faith and hope. So, though a true disciple of Jesus, a lover of Christ,

for a week he doubted the truth of the Resurrection.

Most of us, though we can say, "LORD, I believe!" need also to say, "Help Thou mine unbelief!" Faith, spiritual sight, is like natural sight, different at different times, e.g., a view over the country; degrees of mist hide it more or less; or our eyes may be out of order. So with our faith.

b. Does the actual truth of the Christmas story always seem quite certain to us? GOD lying in a manger! Do we never doubt the truth about the Blessed Sacrament? never say, "Can it really be the Body and Blood of CHRIST?" Many things to try us and upset our faith.

(i) There are people who deny any such thing as sacramental power, loudly and confidently; who ridicule the idea, and us who believe in it. Sometimes we may fear they are right.

(ii) There are good people who obey the command, "Do this!" but deny the Real Presence. Who accuse us of idolatry when we adore our GOD, Whom we believe to be present.

(iii) Our own experience. We find ourselves cold and undevout; with little real desire for our Communion. Find ourselves so quickly falling into sin. Are perhaps inclined to lay the fault to the gift, rather than to the receiver.

So we may realize how good an Act for us is, LORD, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.

II. The way to come to full faith.

a. How S. Thomas gained it.

He was not convinced by what the others said. But, "After eight days," etc. He went where JESUS was most likely to be found; the assembly of the faithful on the first day of the week. He sought his LORD's Presence; and he found it. And that was enough; he did not want to touch. He cried, "My LORD and my GOD!"

b. So our faith in the Child of Bethlehem—in the Sacrament of the Altar—may be *increased* in the same way.

(i) We must go among those who believe, seeking the Presence of CHRIST where the Church says it is to be found.

To assist at the Holy Eucharist is good. May feel like S. Thomas, when all others are receiving, and we cannot. But do not stay away.

Prepared reception is better. Even if it can only be done as a duty, to fulfil the command of Him in Whom we believe.

(ii) We must come among the faithful in the right spirit; not just to find out whether He is there or not.

In humble hope of finding Him there to bless us.

In penitence : for much of our lack of faith may be a result of our sins ; our punishment for them.

In loving desire for union with our LORD ; that we may by life and word carry the good news to others.

With much prayer that He would increase our faith.

Then when on Christmas morning,

You think of the holy Child in the Manger —you hear the words of Consecration—you kneel at the Altar to receive : you may be able to say with all your heart, " My LORD and my GOD ! "

And you will have CHRIST's blessing, " Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Collects : S. Thomas' Day : Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

X

Before the First Sunday in Lent

The Rainbow, a Pledge

On Quinquagesima Sunday we read of the Rainbow, the pledge of God's mercy after His great judgment. *Gen.* viii. 21 ff; ix. 11-17.

God then first used the Rainbow as a token and pledge of His promise.

In like manner Jesus took natural things, and made them pledges of His grace, in all Sacraments.

The outward part in Holy Communion is spoken of in three ways:

It is a *sign* of the real spiritual Presence of Christ. It is the *means* by which we receive His Body and Blood. It is also a *pledge* to us of our union with Him.

Some have taught that it is a pledge and nothing more; an assurance of God's intention to bless us; like a seal, the wedding-ring, etc. But the Church Catechism teaches us that it is all three. And if we believe in it as a sign and a means, it may help us to think of it now as a pledge; something to assure us.

I. The sense in which the Sacrament, and the receiving of it, is a Pledge.

The Thanksgiving prayer after Communion, "Almighty and everlasting GOD," etc., draws it out for us. (Read down to "Passion of Thy dear SON.") The word "duly" we shall have to think of again.

a. Receiving the outward part, "these holy mysteries," is a pledge to us that we are fed "with the spiritual food of the most precious Body," etc., i.e., that we are made partakers of CHRIST. Whoever has made a good Communion may be sure that he has CHRIST dwelling in him. It does not depend on his feelings then or after, if he has come with the right disposition.

b. Communion is a pledge to us

(i) "Of GOD's favour and goodness towards us." The communicant may be greatly depressed, greatly tempted. Is inclined to think he is apart from GOD. But no! he ought to be sure of GOD's favour.

(ii) "That we are very members incorporate . . . all faithful people." We have not forfeited our baptismal birthright, to be members of CHRIST; and so have a communion with all the faithful, living and departed.

(iii) "That we are also heirs through hope," etc. Communion on earth is the highest privilege of heirs; but is only the foretaste of the bliss of perfected union with GOD,

won for us by the precious Death and Passion.

Of all this our Communion is a pledge. Yet Communion is not this always to all people. For

II. That it may be such a Pledge it must be "duly received."

This seems to bring in an element of doubt—doubt, not of GOD, but of ourselves. How can it be a pledge if there is any uncertainty? There need not be any, for "duly received" means, as the Church directs us. And there need be no uncertainty as to our doing this. There must be

(i) Self-examination. We can all know whether we do this carefully, regularly; seeking the HOLY SPIRIT'S help, taking pains, with a real wish to see and acknowledge our sins.

(ii) Contrition. This it is harder to be sure about. But we can pray for it; we can think of our sins in the light of GOD'S kindness to us, and the sufferings of CHRIST for sin. And to be dissatisfied with our contrition is a good sign.

(iii) Confession. Must be particular and heartfelt. And we must be quite honest as to our use of Sacramental Confession. To come to Communion with an unquiet conscience is not to receive duly; nor with a conscience that has not been stirred up,

awaked, by self-examination. Absolution is always open to us.

(iv) Purpose of amendment. Be quite honest about this too. See that you are really striving against the sins you have to confess so frequently, to overcome the bad habit, to do the duty you are apt to neglect ; are really avoiding the occasions of sin.

If we come fulfilling these conditions, then making our Communion *is* a pledge to us of the blessings we have thought of.

This is important at the beginning of Lent.

Easter Communion is ahead of us. To those who have not yet made their first Communion, or to those returning after lapse, one might say, Wait till Easter : use Lent as a preparation. But regular communicants ought to gain many steps by Easter.

To do this we must be in union with our LORD ; and know that we are. For that will help us to be contrite ; that will give us hope ; that will prevent our getting weary.

If you are wondering, doubting, whether you are in grace or not, thinking it is little use trying, Lent will be wasted to you. But if you are assured that CHRIST is with you, then you need fear no evil.

So make a good Communion as near the beginning of Lent as you can. That you may feel sure that GOD is with you ; that you will not be overwhelmed in the flood of sin.

XI

Before the First Sunday in Lent

Elijah in the Wilderness

1 *Kings* xix. 1-8.

The Forty Days' Fast has come ; a time to make special efforts after holiness, after closer nearness to God.

Three great instances of such fasts, by the three who appeared in glory at the Transfiguration : Moses, Elijah, and our Lord. The fast of Elijah may teach us as to use of Holy Communion in Lent.

I. Elijah's condition at this time.

a. Had done great things for God : xviii. 39 ff. Yet all seemed as bad and hopeless as ever. In peril of his life, he has to fly. Longs to be alone in his trouble ; ℣. 3. Feels his life a failure and desires to die ; ℣℣. 4, 14. Despairs of doing anything more for God.

b. All servants of God feel like this at times.

(i) We are fighting against evil. Are few against many ; on God's side and against Baal. This at any rate we profess by being

fail to advance. We make our Communion, and then go to sleep again.

But now once again, by the voice of His Church, GOD rouses us again, and says, "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee." A good thing, if we can, to make a Communion at the beginning of Lent. Cannot keep it rightly in our own strength. The journey is too great; not that we have to do great things; but have to trudge on through the wilderness.

IV. See the result of it all. 11-18.

a. Elijah learns more of GOD. Finds that GOD's power is shown, not only in the fierce judgments, but in the still small voice. That he is not the only true servant of GOD left, as he thought. That GOD still has a mission for him, preparatory to his own removal from this world.

b. If this be the result of our Lent, it will be blessed.

To find GOD's will in the still small voice of conscience. To make this really the rule of our life, the rule of our fitness for Communion. To realize in our Easter Communion our real fellowship with the saints, so as to feel we are never left alone in our service of GOD. We think of ourselves too much as individuals in our religion, in our work for GOD. As individuals we must be judged; but we fight, we work, as members

of a Body, the Holy Catholic Church, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

So try to make a good Communion ; and in the strength of that Meat go through the forty days, till you come to the height of an Easter Communion.

Say Psalm lvi.

XII

In Holy Week, for Easter*

Sorrow turned into Joy

S. John xvi. 20-22.

To-night (Good Friday) we can understand these words.

Never such a day of sorrow to Christ's friends! That terrible eighteen hours when the Passion was rushed through. All so quick and unexpected: now He was dead: hope died out of their hearts. *S Luke* xxiv. 21.

On Saturday, perhaps, they were calmer: women found comfort in preparing their spices, etc. Yet still their tears continued.

But what joy in the morning! *Ps.* xxx. 5.

When Mary Magdalene, weeping at the tomb, —the holy women on their way back,—S. Peter, —one after another,—by assurance of friends, by the sight of their eyes, learned, The Lord is risen indeed.

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* The Addresses in preparation for Easter Communion were given on the evening of Good Friday, after a custom existing for many years in the parish.

To-night, between Good Friday sorrow and Easter joy, take the thought of sorrow leading to, turned into, joy.

I. The joy of our Easter Communion.

For at the Altar this joy will be most fully found.

What was the Easter joy of CHRIST's friends? for ours may be the same.

a. Joy that He lived Who was dead. *S. John* xvi. 22; xx. 20.

(i) Never knew how much they loved Him till they had lost Him. Like the joy of Mary. *S. Luke* ii. 46.

(ii) So our first joy should be for our LORD's sake. Have sorrowed for Him dying; may rejoice with Him living: have seen Him humbled and scorned; *Ps.* xxii. 6 ff., now vindicated and glorious. *Rom.* i. 4.

Contrast appearance of church on Good Friday and Easter Day.

b. The joy that brings peace. "Love, joy, peace," is the order.

(i) What peace could they have who had deserted and denied Him? What, even to the quite faithful, while He was in the grave? A "deceiver"? But when they saw His loving face,—heard His greeting of peace, *S. John* xx. 19, 21, 26, after the excitement of fear and joy, a sweet peace would settle on their souls.

(ii) So for us in Eastertide there should be peace.

May have had to go through a conflict in our souls; have shared His Passion in sorrow for sin. And in the assurance of pardon,—the sense of re-dedication to GOD, we may have peace with GOD and man.

c. The joy of being reunited to Him.

(i) The great sorrow of death, apart from sin, is in the parting of those who love. The friends of JESUS knew His innocence, which even enemies acknowledged. *S. John* xviii. 38; xix. 4, 6. To His Mother His death was like that of an infant to us, without anxiety or fear. But there is the parting. How much harder to part with JESUS.

But at the Resurrection they were reunited to their Master and Friend: though not His companions as before, they knew He was near them.

(ii) This what we look for in Easter Communion.

Union with CHRIST, closer union than ever. Being of one mind with Him about sin, about our neighbours, we draw near to Him that He may dwell in us.

We desire to be partakers, not only of the Sacrament, but of CHRIST. If we are coming forgiven, resolved, in earnest, then the promise of CHRIST is to us. *S. John* vi. 56 ff. A union not merely of contact and friendship, see *S. John* xx. 17, but of life.

These three things every communicant at

Easter should have: faith in the Risen LORD; peace; union with CHRIST.

II. The sorrow that must go first.

The true lasting joy comes out of sorrow. *Ps.* xxii. 1, 22; cx. 7; cxxvi. 6. *S. Matt.* v. 4. Good Friday before Easter; penitence before Holy Communion; the cross before the crown. In this world of sin, there is

a. No joy without sorrow.

So we cannot truly rejoice in the Resurrection unless we have troubled about our sins, viewed them in the light of the Passion. That surely what repentance means. Good Friday a great opportunity to learn *Contrition*. Pray for it; dwell on the sufferings of CHRIST; say to ourselves, "This is what I deserve, the wages paid for my sins; so each sin of mine is a cause of the Passion."

b. No peace without war. *S. Luke* xi. 21 ff.

If we have peace in our Easter Communion, we shall soon lose it if we do not fight. We want a right and lasting peace; for this we must be ready to meet the enemy whenever he comes against us.

Take care in Eastertide: cannot afford to despise our enemy. *Cant.* ii. 15.

Make Low Sunday as like Easter Day as you can.

c. No lasting union with CHRIST without separation from evil things. 2 *Cor.* vi. 14, etc. This involves self-sacrifice; must make

up our mind to this *before* we make our Communion. May cause us pain, trouble, the right hand, the right eye! *S. Matt.* v. 29 ff. But it may be a choice between CHRIST and this thing. Be honest as to what you mean to do about any occasion of sin.

So the right sorrow will be turned into true joy. The sorrow of penitence into the joy of pardon; of fruitless effort into the joy of sin overcome. duty accomplished; of being apart from GOD into the joy of union with our Risen LORD.

XIII

In Holy Week, for Easter

The Preparation for the Passover

S. John xi. 54-56.

These words refer to the Passover at which Christ died. May help us in preparing for our Paschal Feast. For our minds are filled with thoughts of His Death ; we are hoping to sing, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

I. The state of men's hearts at that Passover.

a. Jesus walked no more openly. Because the Jews had in will already committed their great crime ; *S. John* xi. 50, 53, 57. There were many to whom He could no longer offer Himself.

Are there any such among us ? Sins of will are real sins. Many do not commit sins, only from lack of opportunity, from fear.

We may offend "by will, word, or deed." To such Jesus cannot offer Himself, unless they repent.

b. He continued with His disciples, with those willing to share His reproach, His danger. Has this been true of us this Lent? "Near to the wilderness," i.e., in self-denial.

c. There were some who doubted whether He would come to the Feast. "What think ye?" etc. Do any of us doubt His Presence and His coming in our Communion Feast? Sometimes I fear it may be so.

II. The Passover Feast.

"The Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh."

a. It was their greatest feast. All who possibly could went to it; he who stayed away wilfully incurred great guilt. *Num.* ix. 13.

So our Easter Communion corresponds to it. In the time. In the greatness of the Festival. In the obligation. Rubric: "And note, that every parishioner," etc.

b. It was a memorial feast. The memory of a great deliverance. *Deut.* xvi. 2 ff. Our Easter feast is the true Passover; when S. John wrote, it had taken the place of the Jews' feast. It also is a memorial of the great deliverance by the Death and Resurrection of CHRIST.

c. It was a *feast* on a *sacrifice*. When Israel were settled in their land it was to be slain only in the Holy Place. It was a life given in the place of the lives of Israel's firstborn. But was also a feast, partaken of by the whole family. So our Passover is a sacri-

ficial feast. We offer to GOD the true Lamb, slain once for all; so making the remembrance of His Death. Then we feed on Him, with a thankful remembrance of His Death, with our loins girded for our journey.

III. The Preparation for the Passover. *v.* 55.

a. This was necessary for all. See 2 *Chron.* xxx. 2 ff. 17-20. Passover put off for a month rather than that they should come unpurified.

Much more ought *we* to prepare. Our Feast is higher and more awful.

The holiness of Christians should be greater. If you cannot sanctify yourself in time, put off your Communion till Low Sunday. Some perhaps come who would be better for Absolution beforehand. The parish priest has to pray, like Hezekiah, "The good LORD pardon, etc., *v.* 18 ff. This may be the intention of the Church in the public Absolution. But do not presume upon that.

b. Various causes made a person unfit to partake :—

(i) Women after child-birth. The sinfulness of our human nature enough to make cleansing necessary for us.

(ii) Uncleanness from bodily infirmities. Our personal spiritual defects often make us unfit. Our temper, love of ease, pride, etc.

(iii) Recovered lepers, before they had peformed the appointed rites. Had to submit to the judgment of the priest. So those who have been living in sin or carelessness, separated from the Communion of Saints, may well go to the priest for Absolution, before they return to full Communion.

(iv) Those defiled by touching a dead body. We have spiritual difficulties through our neighbours. Through the sins of those near us, we sometimes get defilement; through some sudden coming into contact with a neighbour.

Do any such causes as these hinder our fitness for the Paschal Feast?

c. The means of purification.

(i) A sin-offering. This answers to our offering of penitence. There was confession of sin, the death of the creature, the sprinkling of the offerer with the blood. In some cases restitution. *Lev*. vi. 4 ff.

Reminding us that all our forgiveness depends on the Death of the great Victim; and that we must be cleansed by His Blood.

(ii) A burnt-offering. Expressing the offering of self and life which the penitent must make; the new life which we must steadfastly purpose.

All this was the kind of thing for which many went up to Jerusalem out of the country beforehand. We have not to move out of our place. But let each set about, perfect, his preparation;

employing the means set before him by GOD through His Church.

Then may our Paschal Feast be duly kept; and be to all a Feast of joy and gladness; of gratitude for the past; of hope for the future.

Collects: First and second after Easter.

XIV

In Holy Week, for Easter

Jesus washing the Disciples' Feet

S. John xiii. 1-17.

This is S. John's account of the preparation for the First Communion. He does not tell of the institution ; had nothing to add to the four earlier accounts. But describes the solemn action of Christ, which was plainly a preliminary to the Feast.

He introduces it as a great and significant action ; *vv.* 1, 3.

May teach us about our preparation for Easter Communion. As Jesus prepared His disciples, so we desire Him to prepare us.

I. An example of humility.

a. See what Jesus says ; 13-15. His action is that of a servant ; *S. Luke* xxii. 27. A type of the Incarnation ; *Phil.* ii. 7. S. Peter was horrified at Christ stooping so. And all this He does, "knowing," etc. ; *v.* 3. With His throne and kingly power full in view,

with His consciousness of His speedy return to the FATHER, "He took a towel," etc.

b. One great necessity to coming rightly to Holy Communion is humility. *S. James* iv. 6; *S. Luke* i. 52.

(i) A deep sense of our own unworthiness. "Consider the dignity of that holy mystery." What it is, etc. How can we sinners ever dare to come? We must fulfil the conditions set before us. But not trust in anything we do; as if we should say, "I have done this or that; so certainly I may come." Rather a feeling of utter unworthiness is one test of our fitness. *S. Matt.* viii. 8. We are taught to say, "We do not presume," etc.

(ii) In humility towards other people. Pride is a great bar to being reconciled to others. Easier to humble oneself to GOD, than to a fellow-creature; easier to confess our sins, than to say to another, "I was wrong." And beware of comparing self with others. If we are "to wash one another's feet," it surely must mean that we are to count ourselves below them, and behave accordingly. Be willing to do them humble service. Abstain from judging them as they come to Holy Communion.

II. The need of cleansing for all. 8-10.

a. JESUS shows S. Peter the need of being washed by Him; a symbol of the cleansing

of the soul, which only JESUS can impart. The washing S. Peter needed was not like the bath ; *v.* 10. JESUS calls them all clean, except Judas ; but He must wash their feet, or they have no part with Him.

b. So before our Communion must come cleansing.

We have all been bathed in the laver of regeneration ; *Titus* iii. 5.

But there is the dust of daily life ; "The devil lets no saint reach heaven with clean feet." The best of us need cleansing from our constant sins. The Precious Blood is ready. The condition is true repentance.

c. Notice, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me." And yet, "He that eateth My Flesh . . . dwelleth in Me," etc. So that to receive the Sacrament without cleansing will not make us "partakers of CHRIST." How sad, if at our Easter Communion here JESUS should have to say, "Ye are not all clean!" He knew him that would betray Him.

III. The need of the spirit of love.

a. This incident was a manifestation of CHRIST's love ; *v.* 1. The love which brought about the humiliation of the Incarnation. Love made Him wash their feet ; He knew what was in Judas' heart ; yet treated him the same ; gave him loving words of warning. Love made Him invent

this Sacrament for us, not content with dying for us.

b. This too must be part of our fitness. We must come

(i) In love to God. For His sake, that we may be ready and able to give Him glory by our life. For love is shown by trying to please Him; *v*. 17; xiv. 15. Not just a matter of feeling.

(ii) In love to others; for this is the very mark of our discipleship; *v*. 35.

One result of Communion is to be in union with others through union with God; power to help others as Jesus helps us.

IV. Patience, and hope for higher things.

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

a. True as regards our cleansing from sin. We do not realize all that forgiveness means, all that it cost the Son of God. But as we draw nearer to God, get a deeper sense of sin, we shall know.

b. True as regards the Blessed Sacrament. The Apostles could not have realized when Jesus took the bread, etc., all that it meant; but afterwards the Holy Ghost brought it all to their remembrance.

We wonder that we do not realize more the Presence of our Lord.

The Sacrament does not seem to do for us what we are taught to expect. Remember

we are in an imperfect state, in a condition of half-knowledge; we cannot expect perfection yet. But JESUS promises that we shall know hereafter. If only we will try to do what He tells us, and follow on. *Hosea* vi. 1-3.

"If ye *know* these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them."

If ye humble yourselves before GOD, and your fellows.

If ye seek to be cleansed from the smallest sin by JESUS.

If your hearts are full of love to GOD and man.

If patiently and hopefully you struggle on towards perfect knowledge, perfect holiness, which JESUS risen can give you; then shall you have the blessing of more and more perfect union with Him.

XV

In Holy Week, for Easter

Joseph begging for the Body of Jesus

S. Mark xv. 42-46 ; *S. John* xix. 38-42.

On Good Friday we must look back, and look forward. Back to the Death we commemorate ; forward, to think, what can I do because of it ? If we have looked back to the Passion, caused by our sins, then we may carry our thoughts forward to Easter morning. We hope to come into the church then, and find it looking very different ; type of the Easter joy, after the sadness of the Passion. We are looking forward to an Easter Communion, some for the first time.

Remember what some holy men and women were doing on the evening of Christ's Death.

I. They begged that they might have the Body of Jesus.

They would show Him what honour they could, in reparation for the dishonour and shame inflicted on Him. It is spoken of in all the four Gospels ; a noteworthy act, acceptable to God.

a. This our desire and prayer before Easter, that the Body of JESUS may be given to us. But we ask for no *dead* body; JESUS has risen, never more to die. His Body a spiritual Body now, with a higher life than we know, or can understand.

When we say that we believe His Body to be on the Altar we mean nothing carnal, nothing natural.

> "Word-made-flesh true bread He maketh
> By His Word His Flesh to be," etc.

Our outward senses have nothing to do with the inward Presence. But we believe in the words, the power, of GOD Incarnate:

That in the Blessed Sacrament we find His Body:

That by means of the outward part we receive it:

That by duly receiving it, we receive JESUS CHRIST into our souls:

That through Him we have union with GOD.

b. So if we are hoping to make our Easter Communion, we are going to beg that the Body of JESUS may be given us;

That we may honour Him by obeying His command:

That we may have the most precious gift on earth.

II. They needed to be brave for this.

a. Both Joseph and Nicodemus had been disciples secretly. Now one would have thought it would require greater courage than ever to acknowledge themselves such. But Joseph went in boldly; Nicodemus brought his load of spices, remembering perhaps what JESUS had said to him; *S. John* iii. 14 ff. "Already the power of CHRIST's death begins to work; so that in His humiliation the rich gain strength and courage to confess Him openly."

b. We, too, need boldness in asking for the Body of JESUS.

(i) Boldness as regards GOD. It is a tremendous gift to ask for.

"We do not presume," etc. But we may come with a holy boldness. See hymn 321, *v*. 4.

(ii) Boldness in confessing CHRIST before men. What those two men did committed them entirely to CHRIST. So in coming to Communion we commit ourselves to being His servants. We may be spoken against, laughed at. But if we have a good conscience we need not mind that.

c. What we think about on Good Friday ought to give us this courage.

Through His Death we may have forgiveness of all that is past. And none need fear to come if past sin is forgiven.

Brave love to Him in return for brave

love. JESUS did not mind what He endured for us.

III. What they did with the Sacred Body.

a. "They wrapped it in linen," etc. "Surely of all earthly and material things none are so worthy of our devout remembrance as these which wrapped the Body of the LORD of heaven and earth." "The fine linen is the righteousness of saints." So it typifies what should be the after life of one who has received JESUS.

b. S. Joseph had a new tomb, undefiled by a dead body. Would that our hearts and our bodies were like that! that nothing had ever lain therein to defile them! But we may pray, "Make me a clean heart, O GOD." "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts."

c. Nicodemus brought myrrh and aloes.

Myrrh, the symbol of death. We must die to self, to the world; must crucify the flesh.

Aloes, bitterness, continued penitence. *Isa*. xxxviii. 15.

IV. That Body, buried in humiliation, was soon to rise again.

a. It was helpless then; dependent on the loving, reverent hands of men. But soon it would be glorious in the perfection of

risen life; not subject to corruption, not holden by the grave.

b. A type of the effect of Holy Communion on us.

The precious Body and Blood are dependent on our reverence for their right and worthy use.

JESUS makes a temple of GOD out of a tomb. Through the Blessed Sacrament the principle of life is within us, which shall raise up the man at the Last Day.

So seek the Body bravely, if you are a friend of JESUS.

In spite of past failures, past cowardice; in the thought of His Passion and Death fear no longer to be known as one of His disciples.

And then He will raise us up even now. For see *S. John* v. 25.

The result of Communion is to be a spiritual resurrection from death to new life.

XVI

In Holy Week, for Easter

The Easter Anthem

In primitive times Christians of all Churches, when they met on Easter morn, saluted each other with, "Christ is risen!" "He is risen indeed!" Our Church supposes us to be eager to do the same. For the first bit of praise (in the right order of the services) is this, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," etc. The only day on which we do not begin with *Venite Exultemus*. Take it for our thoughts on our Easter Communion. In three parts.

I. "Christ our Passover," etc. 1 *Cor.* v. 7, 8.

a. This carries our minds back to the event of Good Friday.

Jesus is the true Paschal Lamb, of Whom not a bone should be broken. He was then sacrificed for us men and for our salvation; He offered His life to be a propitiation for our sins. "He made there a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice," etc.

Bear the awful sadness of the Passion in your mind while you think upon your sins.

b. But the Passover was chiefly a feast, eaten in strange circumstances and in haste. All partook of the Paschal lamb. And we are called on to give thanks to GOD, for that He hath given His SON, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy Sacrament.

So it follows, "Therefore let us keep the Feast." The Easter Feast is the natural sequel to the Good Friday Sacrifice. "This is My Body which is *given* for you": so, "Take, *eat*." We are forgiven for our sins through His Death; we feed on His resurrection life in the Holy Communion. So those who have knelt beneath the Cross are called to join in the happy Easter Feast.

c. "Not with the old leaven," etc. The purging out of all leaven, to the smallest particle, from their houses, was a great feature of the Jewish preparation for the Passover. So S. Paul calls all the evil we must put away, "leaven." We are to make our Communion in sincerity and truth. So must put away all malice and wickedness. First, by repenting of the past. Sin is not forgiven merely because we leave it off. Then by putting away from our daily life all that is evil in flesh and spirit.

II. **"Christ being raised from the dead," etc.** *Rom.* vi. 9-11.

a. This speaks to us of the present glorious condition of our Risen LORD.

The resurrection of CHRIST is not like the resurrection (e.g.) of Lazarus. It is to a new life, no longer subject to change or death, no longer needing support from earthly things, independent, perfected. He died unto sin. By His Death on the Cross He passed out of the range and power of sin; before, it could make Him *suffer*; but now could no longer affect Him at all. Any more than a corpse can feel the fire that consumes it.

And now the life that He liveth, He liveth unto GOD.

b. Here, then, is the pattern of our life as communicants. "Likewise reckon ye yourselves," etc. Our Communion is a spiritual resurrection through union with our risen LORD. *S. John* v. 25; *Col.* iii. 1, 3.

We are freed from the dominion of sin; free to give GOD our life, our service. Our great aim must be to live unto GOD. If we make our Communion rightly we are alive unto GOD. Must take great care that we do not die again. After Easter is as important, and perhaps harder than before. Look on Easter Communion as a beginning, not as an end. It *is* a height to which we have climbed; but we should

go on from that level, to climb still higher.

III. **"Christ is risen from the dead," etc.** 1 *Cor.* xv. 20-22.

Here is our hope for the future.

a. CHRIST is the first-begotten from the dead; "the firstfruits of them that are asleep," R.V. The first sheaf of the glorious harvest at the Last Day. *S. Matt.* xiii. 30. This gives us hope; for His resurrection is the pledge of our own, of the rising again of those who have gone before us.

b. Remember how Holy Communion is connected with the Resurrection hereafter. The effects of the Bread of Life; *S. John* vi. 39, 40, 44, 54. The words of administration. "Preserve thy body," etc.

And so: Seek pardon for the past through the Sacrifice of CHRIST!

Seek life in this world through union with the risen LORD!

Seek immortality of body and soul!

XVII

Before Fourth Sunday after Easter

Our Lord dealing with His friends at Easter

S. Luke xxiv. 13-35.

This Sunday important: for it is a month from Easter Day; is for some the only Communion between Easter and Whitsunday.

Our Lord's dealing with these two friends of His may help us to think how He has to deal with us.

I. Jesus went with them, but was not recognized.

a. We have received Him on Easter Day: but perhaps do not notice His Presence with us.

It is shown in an unexpected form; by temptations, difficulties, etc.

"We hoped" He would have done more for us.

b. May be quite sure the Risen Lord is close to us, caring about us.

If we "stand still looking sad," the cause is in ourselves.

II. Jesus had to blame them for their sadness and perplexity.

He makes them tell Him the cause; *vv.* 17, 19.

Then He has to say, "O foolish men," etc.; *v.* 25.

a. Our sadness in Eastertide is caused by our sins.

Compare your Easter Communion with your conduct since.

Everything has not gone as we meant it to go,—as we hoped.

Some have found Eastertide time of hard temptation.

Perhaps you would rather not talk, or think, about it.

b. But JESUS will not let you be.

"What things?" Self-examination.

He would have you *know*, and *acknowledge*, what causes you have to be sad. You must *confess* it.

To Him; 1 *S. John* i. 9.

To His representative perhaps: 2 *Cor.* ii. 10, 11; v. 18, 19. We, GOD's Priests, do not want to come between you and JESUS; but to help you to Him.

c. Perhaps He has to blame you for your want of hope. "Ought not CHRIST to have suffered," etc. Ought His followers to expect it to be easy for them?

Why lose hope, because you feel the warfare of evil against you?

III. Jesus then taught them about Himself, from the Scriptures.

So He showed them how they had got wrong ; *v.* 27. See *vv.* 45, 46.

A real part of constant preparation for Communion is to be learning more about our LORD.

The right use of Holy Scripture : reading, studying, meditating.

As we do so, sometimes our heart will "burn within us" ; not always, perhaps not often ; but persevere. It is the living Word of GOD.

IV. Jesus was asked to abide.

So they got their chief blessing.

The great thing for Communicants is to try to keep JESUS with them. *S. John* xv. 4-7.

a. May keep His presence by earnest prayer ; "Abide with us."

Thank Him that He has come, and ask Him to stay.

We must not be like thankless beggars ; nor inhospitable friends.

b. It is sin that drives Him away ; must watch as well as pray.

Must not be like coming to a king's court, —dressing,—behaving rightly,—with composed faces, etc. And when we come out throwing off court manners, etc.

We *do* come to the King's court ; but we take the King with us when we go ; let us not offend Him by our manners.

Be very careful; very watchful against sin after Communion; against the beginnings of old sins. "Take us . . . the little foxes," etc. *Cant.* ii. 15.

V. Jesus made known in the breaking of bread. *vv.* 30, 31, 35.

a. May know *about* Him through sermons, etc. May know *Him* through Communion. There shall grow intimate with Him. May vanish quickly; but never mind. By regular, humble, reverent Communions shall learn to know His holiness, His power, His love.

b. Do not keep it to yourselves; *vv.* 33-35.

Having found Him ourselves, must wish to make Him known to others.

Do not be afraid to say what you find in Communion; what you mean to do about it; to help and encourage another to come. Will find help yourself.

Remember, then:

That Jesus may be with you, though you perceive it not.

That if you are sad the great thing is to tell Him about it.

That you must let Him teach you; get Him to stay with you.

That learning to know Him better, and so to love Him more, we shall be blessed ourselves; we shall be the source of blessing to others.

XVIII

In Eastertide

Eternal Life and Resurrection

S. John vi. 54-58; xi. 25 ff.

Those who have made their Easter Communion may well think of, and pray about, two things :—

Perseverance : for it is sad to fall away after Easter, and only too easy.

The future resurrection of the body : which we hope will complete our likeness to our Risen Lord.

We ought to be gaining in spiritual likeness to Him now ; and we hope then for bodily likeness too.

Our Lord in the discourse at Capernaum tells us that both of these are results of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood ; i.e., of good Communions.

Eternal life is life begun now which will not end ; i.e., perseverance.

To be raised up at the Last Day refers to a resurrection of the body, the resurrection of life ; v. 29.

I. "Hath eternal life."

a. This is a *present* possession, not merely future. For this life is union with God through Christ, the life which was given us at our new birth in Baptism.

Our life is in Christ, our Divine Head, the second Adam. He who is a living member of Christ receives life from His life; as a member from the head, as a branch from the tree; xv. 4 ff.

"I am the life," says our Lord; and he who has this union with Him has life that shall last. The death of the body is no interruption to it; for that is but the temporary separation of soul and body; not the parting of the man from God.

Sin interrupts this life; but sin is a matter of our own will; God's grace is sufficient to keep us from wilful sin.

b. This eternal life—abiding in Christ—perseverance—is one great fruit of the Blessed Sacrament.

The partaking of this Sacrament is needful for all who can have it; "generally necessary to salvation." It is the appointed means of continued union with Christ. One Communion is not sufficient; for this Sacrament is after the analogy of bodily food; which should be constant, regular, for good health.

Are not many "weak and sickly" because they neglect this Food?

II. "I will raise him up at the Last Day." *vv.* 39 ff, 44, 54.

a. JESUS is the Resurrection. Therefore what is said of Him is true of the man in whom He dwells. See *Acts* ii. 24, 26 ff; 1 *Cor.* xv. 20, 23.

b. This is constantly connected with the Holy Communion.

"The medicine of immortality, the antidote against death."—*S. Ignatius.*

"As bread out of the earth, receiving the invocation of GOD, is no longer common bread, but Eucharist, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly; so our bodies, receiving the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of resurrection."—*S. Irenæus.*

"The food that nourisheth to immortality."—*S. Cyril.*

c. So Communion is to give us hope of participating in the glorious Resurrection.

Our bodies now are sinful, masterful; full of pain and weakness. We look forward to the body becoming as ready an instrument of the guided spirit as is the spiritual Body of CHRIST. Sinless, so no longer having to be kept under, and brought into subjection. Strong and free, no longer weak and circumscribed. Impassible, not full of aches and pains. For this better life the Body of Him Who rose again is to preserve us. So we may have eternal life and resurrection through the most holy Sacrament.

III. But this does not merely mean "being a communicant."

a. "He that eateth," *v.* 56, must mean, he that eateth so as to be a partaker of CHRIST. "The wicked" receive the outward part, "are guilty of" the inward part, but do not receive "the benefits"; i.e., are not partakers of CHRIST.

b. "This is the will of the FATHER," etc.; *v.* 40. This is not an alternative to eating and drinking; but gives a condition of right receiving.

Those who behold (see *Num.* xxi. 9; *S. John* iii. 14 ff), and believe on JESUS.

c. So, too, the right eating is conditioned by 1 *Cor.* xi. 28. And this is expanded for us by the Church in the First Exhortation.

A man must prove himself, as to whether he has truly repented; as to whether he is honestly resisting sin, trying to perform his duties, to be right in his relation to others.

Only so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

So meditate on these two great Easter blessings, present eternal life, and future resurrection.

Consider whether your Communions are so made as to give you good hope that these blessings are yours.

Say Psalm xxiii.

XIX

In Eastertide

The Cake of Barley-Bread

Judges vii. 9-14.

This dream was to encourage Gideon, God's instrument, in what might have seemed his hopeless fight. The Israelites, no doubt, were derided by their enemies, the Midianites, as "eaters of barley"; see vi. 11. So the man interpreted the cake as meaning one of the Israelites. The point of it was, a great work wrought by very small means. In this has been seen a type of the Blessed Sacrament.

I. The battle we have to fight.

The great thought after Easter Communion should be perseverance. See Easter Collect. This means a constant fight.

a. What we are in our own strength is typified by those three hundred men of Gideon's in face of the host of enemies: ℣℣. 7, 12. Few and weak, yet a sufficient instrument in God's hand. 1 *Sam.* xiv. 6.

b. Our enemies we know, or ought to. *Ps.* xxxviii. 19; 1 *Cor.* ix. 26. Midian came against Gideon just when he had tried bravely to put away evil: vi. 25. Such enemies to us are our besetting sin; slothfulness in well-doing and religious duties; the bad example and influence of others. These must be fought and overcome if we are to persevere.

II. The power by which our enemies are to be worsted.

The Barley Cake, the Bread of Life, the Blessed Sacrament.

a. To outward appearance the barley bread was nothing. So is the Blessed Sacrament to the world. Despised by some, as Israel despised the manna. "A little bread and wine"; "not discerning the LORD's Body." Many walk by sight, not by faith; think the age of miracles is past; that Communion is a mere outward form, binding men to that which is impossible. But we believe in it as a Sacrament of reality and power.

b. This is what it is made by GOD. Like the cake, small and insignificant in itself, it has virtue and power by His will. See 1 *Cor.* i. 27 ff. So Holy Communion, in the hearts of those who receive it rightly, is mighty to the pulling down of strongholds —"the Corn of the mighty." *Ps.* lx. 12. Of ourselves weak, having Him in us, we

can do all things that He would have us do. No enemy too strong for CHRIST. *O Salutaris Hostia*, etc.

c. So if we would persevere we must use the Sacrament CHRIST has given us, rightly,—intelligently,—regularly.

III. The warriors who overcame in this battle.

For JESUS does not commonly overcome the enemy without instruments. Midian was not destroyed as the Assyrian host was. Communion is not a charm, to save us without our own efforts.

a. There was a great sifting of the people. vii. 3-6.

So there should be before Communion,—but it must be done by ourselves. Notice that those sifted out were the faint-hearted, the self-indulgent.

b. Those who fought were to copy Gideon : vii. 17. So JESUS says to us. His life is our example, and union with Him gives the power to copy Him. Communion is to enable us to do as He did. Not the same things as He did ; but what GOD would have us do in the same spirit and manner that JESUS acted.

c. We must make up our minds to perseverance. See viii. 4. Faint and weary we often may be, but still pursuing. Not content with one half-victory ; but going on till our enemies are utterly overcome.

Think, then, of JESUS saying to you, "Go in this thy might," etc., vi. 14. In the strength of our union with Him we are strong, who of ourselves are weak.

In that strength no enemies will be able to stand against us.

And, victorious ourselves, we shall be able to do our part in helping the Church of CHRIST in her fight against the powers of hell.

[See Dr. Neale's *Original Sequences and Hymns*, p. 11.]

XX

Before Ascension Day

The Ascension and the Holy Eucharist

S. John vi. 60-63.

Our Lord had been discoursing on one of the deepest mysteries of His kingdom on earth, the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. He had not yet instituted it; but seems to have been preparing His disciples' minds for it.

He had taught them,

That He is the Living Bread from heaven. 35, 41.

That He would give them His Flesh to eat. 51 ff.

That this is necessary for life. 53.

These words seemed to some too hard to believe. 60. They took them in a natural and carnal sense. And this Jesus meets by a reference to His Ascension. 62.

I. The reasons why He brought in the Ascension.

How would that mystery help them?

a. One of their difficulties was His saying He

had come down from heaven. 41 ff. They did not know of the Incarnation.

So He brought in the Ascension, as He did in teaching Nicodemus about the other Sacrament. iii. 13. As if to say, "When you see My Body ascend up by its own power, then you may believe that I am more than mere man." When they knew that He had really ascended, then they might believe what He had said, and that He was the One Who came down from heaven. He does not speak merely of the actual witnesses of the Ascension; some were "beholding" as He went up. Acts i. 9-11. But all may contemplate CHRIST ascending and ascended. *S. John* xvi. 16. And this may assure us that He Who thus spoke is indeed One Who came from heaven.

b. Another difficulty was that they thought He meant carnal eating of His natural Body; took the words in a wrong and shocking sense.

(i) When they knew of the Ascension they would know this to be impossible. But His removal from natural presence on earth would not make the Eucharist impossible; rather this was the necessary preliminary to the gift.

It is an earthly gift, for it is the gift on earth of His human nature; but if given in an earthly manner it would satisfy only the purposes of earth; it was to be given in a spiritual and heavenly manner, as Bread from heaven.

JESUS had not His full power as GOD-Man till He had ascended, and received gifts for men, that the LORD GOD might dwell among them.

(ii) Remember our LORD's Body is now a spiritual Body; not subject to laws of matter, space, etc.

The Ascension reminds us of this; no chariot and horses of fire as for Elijah. We can no more understand how the risen Body of CHRIST could suddenly appear,—vanish, —ascend from the earth,—than we can understand how the bread can become His Body; how He takes our bodies and unites them to His.

So the Ascension, the very thing which to natural thoughts makes the Holy Eucharist impossible, really simplifies it to us.

II. The quickening power of the Spirit. 63.

a. This does not mean that our LORD would have us take the former words merely in a figurative sense; as meaning no more than believing in Him. To say He retracted is not reverent; He never spoke in a hurry. Spiritual and figurative are two different things. GOD is Spirit; yet most real; a spiritual body is a real body. So He says these words to remove the former words from the interpretation of mere natural sense and reason; but their truth remains.

b. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," etc. S. Augustine asks, "How is it that the flesh profiteth nothing, when Thou hast said, 'Except a man shall eat My Flesh . . . he shall have no life in him'?" He answers, "Profiteth nothing as they understood it." Said in the same way as, "Knowledge puffeth up"; i.e., of itself, without charity. So the flesh by itself; but add to it the Spirit, and it profiteth very much.

c. "The words that I speak unto you," etc.

My words are spiritually uttered, as having reference to the true, the higher life. To understand His words we must be living the life of the Spirit; to the carnal ear they convey no meaning. They have not the meaning his hearers put on them; but a deeper sense into which only a spiritual man can enter. 1 *Cor* ii. 14.

III. What this teaching may do for us as Communicants.

a. Raise up our thoughts about this great mystery.

The fulfilment of CHRIST's words, "This is My Body"; "The Bread which I will give," etc., does not depend on His earthly presence; rather on His departure, and consequent gift of the Spirit.

Holy Communion is not to be looked on as a charm; the Spirit must dwell in us for it to be profitable.

Sin prevents this indwelling, hinders His work. So sin must be got rid of by repentance, etc.

b. Reminds us

(i) That Holy Communion is one great means by which we have the Ascended CHRIST still with us. A real Presence on our Altars, in our hearts.

(ii) That it is the great means by which we may be prepared to follow Him whither He has gone. For "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of GOD"; but these, united by the Spirit to the Body of JESUS, can.

At the Feast of the Ascension, then,

Lift up your heart to the greatness of the doctrine.

Ask Him to lift you up into Himself.

Say Psalm xxiv.

XXI

Before Ascension Day

Noli Me Tangere!

S. John xx. 14-18.

The first recorded words of Christ after His Resurrection refer to His Ascension. When Mary Magdalene recognized Him, fell at His feet to touch Him, He says, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father."

Strange, mysterious words! Hard to understand how He must not be touched then, but might be when He should have gone. Could not be wrong that His risen Body should be touched at all; for it was allowed to holy Women, the Ten, S. Thomas. *S. Matt.* xxviii. 9; *S. Luke* xxiv. 39; *S. John* xx. 27. And how, when He had taken His human Body into heaven, could she touch Him?

For whatever reason our Blessed Lord did not suffer Mary to touch Him then, His words seem to show us that there is a touching of Him which she might not have then, but should have after He had ascended beyond the reach of the bodily touch. As if He said, "I am

preparing for thee something greater. When I shall have ascended to the FATHER, then shalt thou handle Me more perfectly and more truly, for thou shalt take hold of what thou touchest not, and believe what thou seest not."—*S. Leo.* She must come to S. Paul's mind. 2 *Cor.* v. 16.

The words may give us thoughts to help us to lift up our hearts to our Ascension Day Communion. We sometimes think we should have been more blessed to have been with CHRIST here on earth. This is to desire something lower than receiving Him in Holy Communion.

I. The Presence of Christ with His Church would not be, in the fullest sense, until He had ascended.

a. Remember CHRIST's words, "It is expedient for you," etc. *S. John* xvi. 7.

So we may think that the coming of the Comforter makes possible that spiritual touch of JESUS, which He implied to Mary; and this coming was not till JESUS had ascended. *Ps.* lxviii. 18.; *S. John* vii. 39.

And we know that the HOLY SPIRIT comes, not to take the place of an absent CHRIST; but that the Presence is of the Three in One. *S. John* xiv. 17 ff., 23.

b. So do not think of CHRIST's Ascension as removing Him farther from us. By the coming of the HOLY GHOST, JESUS is always truly present with us. If CHRIST were still

on earth, reigning in Judea, as the disciples hoped He would, some of us might be able to go there to see and adore Him. But He has gone into heaven, has sent His Spirit to dwell in His Church, to make individuals His members, temples of the HOLY GHOST; and so He is far nearer to us than He would have been in such a case.

And we may go and adore, though we cannot see, Him in the great Sacrament of the Altar, where He gives His Sacramental Presence.

II. Ways in which we can spiritually touch our Ascended Lord.

We have received the Spirit, Whom Mary had not received when our LORD spoke to her.

a. By Faith.

A firm living faith in our Ascended LORD. *Eph.* iii. 17.

"By faith we touch CHRIST; and it is better not to touch Him with the hand, and to touch by faith, than it is to caress with the hand and not touch by faith. It was no great matter to touch CHRIST with the hand. The Jews touched Him when they seized Him, bound Him, crucified Him. . . . Do thou touch Him by faith, i.e., approach Him in faith, and firmly believe in Him."—*S. Augustine.*

Faith has a blessed power of effectual touch; as we learn from the woman with

an issue of blood; of her alone CHRIST said, "Somebody hath touched Me."

The Ascension should stir our faith; make JESUS in heaven as present to us as if He were in sight.

b. By Hope.

The touch of hope is prayer; hope leads us to our Risen LORD in prayer; and this is a true touch, specially connected with our preparation for Ascension Day by the Rogation Days.

c. By Love.

CHRIST had said of Mary, "She loved much;" in many ways she showed it. The touch she desired at the sepulchre was one, not of curiosity, nor of unbelief, but of eager love. That touch was not permitted; but true love can touch JESUS now, "Whom having not seen we love."

d. All these, the touch of faith, of hope, of love, may be summed up in CHRIST's special means for giving His Presence to His Church, for enabling His people to touch Him, the Holy Communion. In that Feast the Body and Blood of CHRIST are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful. In no other ordinance is His Presence so near, so assured, so awful.

And it is specially connected with the Ascension by our LORD. *S. John* vi. 60-63. Points to the Ascension as the time when the "hard saying" should be no longer hard to those who are not carnally minded.

> And the celebration of the Holy Eucharist by the Church waited for the Ascension. Then indeed the Church should touch and be touched.

This is our glorious privilege!

To come on Ascension morning and touch our Ascended LORD. But beware that He have not to say to you in another sense, "Touch Me not!" telling us, through our conscience, that we are not fit to touch Him. So prepare, and come in the right spirit.

By faith: believe to Whom we come; know why we come.

By hope: praying for that fitness which we cannot get ourselves.

By love: the love of true contrition, the love of devotion of self, the love of a ruled life; "If ye love Me keep My commandments!" Is there this sign of love in our lives?

If we come to Him in such a spirit then our Communion will be no mere touch, but a having Him always; and through Him eternal life.

XXII

Before Ascension Day

The Lifting up of Christ

S. John xii. 32.

These words refer first to the Crucifixion; so S. John explains them. *v.* 33. Twice before had He used the same expression. iii. 14; viii. 28.

It began to be fulfilled then; has been being fulfilled ever since. 1 *Cor.* i. 23. Nothing has ever drawn men's hearts like the Cross. "We love Him because He first loved us," and "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

But Christ's words may have more than one meaning.

I. They may be applied to the Ascension.

a. This was a lifting up from the earth.

(i) Literally, when He ascended. *Acts* i. 9. Then was He lifted up to His Father's throne. *Dan.* vii. 13; *Acts* ii. 33.

(ii) This was the lifting up of the great Sacrifice before the FATHER. The slaying of the victim was not the last act of a sacrifice. Portions were waved or heaved before GOD. On the Day of Atonement the blood was carried into the Holy of Holies.

The Ascension began the last act of CHRIST's Sacrifice. *Heb.* ix. 12, 24. This is a continuous act. He is a Priest for ever; He ever liveth to make intercession. So He then began to be lifted up as the continual propitiation for our sins.

b. Then began the great drawing to CHRIST.

No disciples were made from the Resurrection to the Ascension. Men began to come in when JESUS crucified was also JESUS exalted to GOD's right hand, and had sent the HOLY SPIRIT.

So to JESUS exalted our hearts are now drawn in love, if we know what He is to us, and if we are poor in spirit.

He is our Treasure: so our hearts will be with Him. He is our Brother: one of ourselves, in the height of heaven. He is our Advocate: Who stands on our side, and pleads our cause, in spite of our unthankfulness to Him.

Remember His words, "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." We may well pray, "Draw me; we will run after Thee."

II. They may be applied to the Holy Eucharist.

The Ascension and the Eucharist connected. *S. John* vi. 61 ff.

a. The Holy Eucharist is a lifting up. What CHRIST does in heaven, that He does in mystery in the Holy Eucharist.

The Eucharist is the representation in figure of His Death ; this He, by the hands of His priests, lifts up and presents before GOD.

b. So in the Holy Communion He draws all faithful souls to Himself.

Those who use it rightly find that there their hearts are indeed drawn to CHRIST. The more we come the more we are drawn to come. Contempt does not follow right familiarity with it, but rather desire. What is this, but JESUS drawing us with the bands of love ?

This is natural ! for Holy Communion is JESUS Himself. Wherever JESUS is, men, whose hearts desire to be true to GOD, are drawn to Him. The Shepherds : the Magi : the holy women, etc. So in the Holy Communion. That is one of the evidences of His love ; and love attracts men's hearts.

c. In being drawn to our LORD we shall be drawn to each other.

(i) A bond between all true members of His Church.

May be separated by thousands of miles; by the unhappy divisions of the Church; by the river of death.

But it is the same JESUS on the Altar, wherever the Holy Eucharist is *duly* celebrated. In adoring, offering, receiving the same JESUS, we may feel we are really one. 1 *Cor.* x. 17.

(ii) If you have an enemy, any one it is hard to forgive, so that you cannot make your Communion, go into His presence and pray. If you do this in reality He will draw your heart to the other.

d. Why do we not feel more drawn to the Blessed Sacrament?

It is no fault in Him. He will not force, but draw us. Causes are,

(i) Want of faith.

Going without much expectation, without realizing Who it is that comes to us, according to our faith it is to us. CHRIST'S invitation ought to be enough to draw us to it. And if we taste we shall see how gracious the LORD is.

(ii) Wrong use of the Sacrament. There are two things to beware of:—

Presumption, causing us to come carelessly.

Scrupulousness, which makes us fear to come at all.

We need the spirit of both the Centurion and Zacchæus.

(iii) Selfishness. So much engrossed with

ourselves that we have little desire for JESUS. If we loved Him more, and remembered that He desires us to come to Him that He may have us, we should not be so selfish as to keep away from Him. Lift up your hearts!

Draw me; we will run after Thee!

Our prayer. Draw us mightily to Thyself for our affections are earthly. Draw us onward and upward. Say, "Yea, let Him take all, forasmuch as my LORD the King is come in peace unto His own house." 2 *Sam.* xix. 30.

Our resolution. We will run after Thee. We will follow Thee. Say, "Surely in what place my LORD the King shall be, . . . even there also will Thy servant be." xv. 21.

XXIII

Before Whitsunday

The Work of the Holy Ghost in Holy Communion

In thinking about the Blessed Sacrament, and in receiving it, our thoughts are mostly fixed on our Lord.

Naturally; for it was He that instituted it, His legacy to the Church: it is His Body that we receive, that He may ever dwell in us: it is to be done in remembrance of Him. So our minds are taken up with Him, Who gives Himself in this way.

But we shall have an imperfect view of this great Mystery if we lose sight of the co-operation of the Holy Spirit.

We are preparing for His Feast; we are in expectation of an outpouring of His grace; let us consider His part in the Holy Eucharist, that our hearts may be thankful to Him.

I. His work in making the Sacrament.

We should expect to find Him working; for He had His part in all the great Mysteries; e.g., the Incarnation; *S. Luke* i. 35; *S. Matt.* i. 20.

The Anointing for His ministry ; *S. Luke* iii. 21 ff. The Passion ; *Heb.* ix. 14. So by His operation the Sacrament is made.

a. He gives the grace to CHRIST's priests in their Ordination, through which they have the power to do in remembrance of CHRIST the same as CHRIST did at the Last Supper.

b. He performs the mystery, of which the priest does but the outward part, the actions and the words. The bread and wine are by Him made to us the Body and Blood of CHRIST. That is the Gift we offer ; that we receive. It is the HOLY GHOST Who thus unites the earthly and the heavenly, the seen and the unseen. So in most Liturgies He is directly invoked.

c. Our LORD speaks of this work of the HOLY GHOST. *S. John* vi. 63. Means surely that even His Flesh, given for the life of the world, depended for its quickening power on the working of the Spirit. So not only in making the Sacrament, but in its effect on us, He works ; He makes it profitable to our souls and bodies. By it He strengthens and refreshes our souls.

II. His work in making us fit for this Holy Sacrament.

Our preparation must be made by His help.

a. On Him depends our being brought into the relation to GOD, which makes Communion possible for us,—our right and privilege.

(i) In Holy Baptism, He conveyed to us our new nature, our membership in CHRIST. Only members of CHRIST can have the Communion of His Body and Blood. Must be new-born before we can be fed with the Bread of Life.

(ii) In Confirmation He gives us the Gift, which, making us strong and perfect Christians, fulfils the ordinary requirement of the Church before we come to Communion.

b. On Him depends the efficacy of our preparation each time we come. He must prepare us, or we are not fit.

(i) Self-examination must be performed by His help. We need the "candle of the LORD" to shine into the dark places of heart and life, lest our heart deceive us. He can bring our sins to our remembrance, and will if we ask Him.

(ii) Contrition. This is sorrow out of love, and "the love of GOD is shed abroad," etc. *Rom.* v. 5. He can make real to our hearts the sufferings CHRIST bore for our sins.

(iii) Forgiveness on Confession. It is He that applies the Precious Blood to our sinful souls: He that gives power to the word of Absolution spoken by the priest.

(iv) Amendment can only be by His grace and help. Look to Him, trust in Him for power to resist evil, to perform good. Without His grace it is impossible; in His strength all things are possible. He shows

the way, guiding us; He gives the power to choose, to persevere.

So in thinking about the Blessed Sacrament in connection with the HOLY GHOST we get these thoughts—

a. That without His work we could have no Eucharist.

So think much of thankfulness to Him.

b. That without His help there can be no right preparation, no life worthy of those in whom He dwells. Call upon Him much this week, for help to get ready; for grace to live consistently.

Say Psalm xlviii.

XXIV

Before Whitsunday

Τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις.

The word most in our thoughts this week should be, "*holy*."

Whitsunday is the Feast of the Holy Ghost.

His work is to make us holy: to work in us holiness.

Our great act of worship on His holy day is the Holy Eucharist.

Our great act of Christian fellowship is the Holy Communion.

In Eastern Liturgies, before the Communion, the deacon cries, "Holy things, for holy persons."

So on Whitsunday two things ought to come together, holy things and holy persons.

I. The Holy Things. Τὰ ἅγια.

a. There is the holy Table, the Lord's Table.

Holy Scripture, in Epistle and Gospel.

The confession of our most holy Faith, in Creed.

Then the holy offerings of the people. And the elements, offered and placed on the

Altar, are holy bread, and holy wine: holy, because given to GOD, set apart for the Sacrament, like the water in the font.

b. But a higher holiness to come; shall be holier things than these. Sanctified by the Word of CHRIST, by the power of the HOLY GHOST, they become the Body and Blood of CHRIST. Then, indeed, we have holy things with us.

Remember S. Gabriel's words: *S. Luke* i. 35.

By the same power that wrought the Incarnation this miracle of the Blessed Sacrament is wrought.

So says our LORD, "This is My Body," etc.

So the Prayer Book: "Grant us therefore . . . so to eat the Flesh," etc.

II. The Holy Persons.

a. Who are they?

The priests who celebrate. An awful thing to have to do. More awful than the High Priest entering into the Holy of Holies. Pray for the celebrant always.

The worshippers. Children and others. Reverence and attention.

The communicants. For they are in danger, lest they should be "guilty of the Body," etc. 1 *Cor.* xi. 27. And so chiefly we must think about

b. The holiness of the communicants. τοῖς ἁγίοις.

Then perhaps you object, "That is what we say ; we are not good enough to come."

There are *degrees of holiness :*

That holiness without which the Communion would be a bad one : that holiness which we are to aim at continually, to which Holy Communion is to bring us.

(i) The ideal holiness. Take this first.

God is holy, and says to us, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." 1 *Peter* i. 15, 16.

When the angels see GOD they veil their faces, and cry, "Holy," etc.

Our Lord shows the holiness of GOD in human form :

Absolute freedom from every kind of evil :

Positive fullness of grace and truth :

Every faculty consecrated to the FATHER'S will in love.

This He desires for us. 1 *Thess.* iv. 3, 7 ; *S. Matt.* v. 8.

Not a mere negative quality ; to be able to say, "I do not," etc.

Not the mere doing of good actions :

But personal love to our LORD, doing good things in fellowship with Him.

So it is a secret thing, unknown even to itself ; yet shining out in the daily life.

This holiness to be gained by the presence of JESUS in the heart, which we have through constant right receiving of the Body and Blood.

By this the HOLY GHOST can make us more and more holy.

So τοῖς ἁγίοις means, to those who are on the way to be holy as JESUS, as GOD.

(ii) The holiness without which we ought not to come to Holy Communion. "Who shall ascend," etc. *Ps.* xxiv. 3-5. And what place on earth more holy than the Altar?

Clean hands and a pure heart. See *S. Jas.* iv. 8.

So must get rid of that which hinders *any* holiness, unforgiven sin. Look well, and see if there be this.

Grieve over it; for it crucified CHRIST: it holds back your soul from the benefits of His Death.

Seek absolution, if your conscience tells you you need it.

Consider your habits, and present way of life.

Then your hands will be clean, because their guilt is washed away in the Precious Blood: your heart will be pure in intention and hope. So you may rise up to His Holy Place.

Think much of the word holy, in preparation for the Feast of the HOLY GHOST. The Holy Mysteries. The Holy Eucharist. The Holy Communion. Holy things to holy persons.

My sanctification by the HOLY GHOST must be gradual and lifelong. In this world it must begin, continue, end, in true penitence. For to the penitent JESUS can, in the Blessed Sacrament, impart His perfect holiness, even the holiness of GOD.

XXV

Before Whitsunday

The Sevenfold Gifts, and the Holy Communion

"Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart."

Isaiah xi. 2. Prayer in Confirmation Service.

We who have been confirmed have these gifts. They ought to be increasing *daily*. "Daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace." "That he may . . . daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit."

There are two ways of increasing them ; *prayer* for the increase ; *use* of the gifts in daily life ; what we do not use we shall lose. *S. Matt.* xiii. 12. Consider how to use them in connection with the Blessed Sacrament.

I. Wisdom.

The gift that enables us to see what our life is for. Preserves us from the folly of worldliness. Keeps before us union with God as the great end of our life.

So it helps us to see the importance of anything that helps us to this end. Particularly of this Sacrament. *S. John* vi. 53 ff.

II. Understanding.

The gift that shows us the right way to this union with GOD. *Ps.* ci. 2 ; cxix. 144 ; *Prov.* xxi. 16. And that this way is by our LORD alone. *S. John* xiv. 6.

So this gift leads us to desire this holy Sacrament, because by it we are united to Him Who is the Way ; by means of it we can have power to follow Him in the way He leads us ; to copy Him in our daily life.

III. Counsel.

This gift helps choice and decision ; helped by it we choose and take the right way. We need this gift,

a. That we may decide rightly whether we may go to Communion on a particular occasion or not.

In our Church we are left largely to our own discretion in this. Are left very free ; but distinct conditions are laid down for us. See First Exhortation. We must be honourable in fulfilling these. So be careful about self-examination by the help of the HOLY SPIRIT, contrition, etc. And then the Spirit of Counsel will enable us to decide.

b. That we may decide rightly about making our confession to a priest. Again we are left

to our own conscience in the matter. And we much need guidance; for there is much to bias us, dislike of the discipline, fear of what others may say, etc. So appeal to the Spirit of Counsel to help you to decide.

So the first three gifts will help us to come rightly to our Communion; pray for them in this connection.

The next three are some of the benefits of Holy Communion; and so will give us intentions with which to come.

IV. Ghostly Strength.

This we all need continually, for we are weak. But as there is this gift we need not be. 1 *Cor.* xvi. 13; *Eph.* vi. 10; 2 *Tim.* ii 1.

Ask for this strength when you make your Communion; in order to overcome particular sins; to be able to do the hard duty.

V. Knowledge.

We hardly realize the importance of getting to know GOD better. *Col.* i. 10; 2 *Pet.* i. 5; iii. 18.

You do not get to *know* a person by reading about him, but by talking to him. So the need of meditation. Still more by living with him. Specially seen in married life. So union with CHRIST, life in Him, through Holy Communion, will give us the closest knowledge of Him, through Whom we know the FATHER.

VI. Godliness: εὐσέβεια.

Piety towards God; and so God-likeness. Another result of union with Christ.

So seek in your Communion likeness to Jesus in these three virtues.

VII. Holy Fear.

a. The spirit in which we must come. No presuming on our knowledge, life, length of time we have been communicants, etc. As penitent sinners, trusting in God's great mercy.

b. The state in which a communicant should live and walk. Recollection, and reverence to the Presence of Him Whom we have received.

Fear of our own weakness, and the power of temptation. And so great carefulness, and avoidance of occasions of sin. *Ps.* xxxiv. 9.

Use these gifts in your preparation this week. That will be a step towards getting them increased through your Communion.

XXVI

Before Whitsunday

The Holy Ghost as the Bond of Unity

The day is near when the Church commemorates the Descent of the Holy Ghost. He came to bind together in one Body the men whom Christ had prepared to be His infant Church. To give life to that Society in which the Blessed Sacrament should be possible ; of which it should be the Sacred Feast.

We are hoping on that day to seek union with God through our Lord. *S. John* vi. 56 ; xiv. 23. May help us to consider how the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of unity ; His work of binding together.

I. The Holy Ghost is the Bond of Union in the Holy Trinity.

"As Thou in bond of love dost join
The Father and the Son."
H. A. & M. 208 (356).

He is in a common relation to the Father and the Son, because He is the Spirit of Both. *S. Matt.* x. 20 ; *Rom.* viii. 9 ; *Gal.* iv. 6. This relationship is from all eternity. So those in whom the

Spirit dwells, and who are led by the Spirit, ought not only to love others, but to be a bond of love between mutual friends, instead of being a separating influence, as so often.

II. The Holy Ghost brought about the Hypostatic Union in our Lord.

a. By His power GOD the SON took flesh of the substance of the Virgin Mary His mother. When S. Gabriel came with his great message the Blessed Virgin's question was, "How?" The answer was, by the power of the HOLY GHOST. *S. Luke* i. 34 ff.

b. The mysterious nature of this union is shown in the limitations and sufferings of the Son of Man on earth.

He Who spread out the heavens like a curtain is wrapped in swaddling-clothes, held in His mother's arms. He Who says, "If I be hungry I will not tell thee," faints with hunger in the wilderness. He Who is everywhere was weary with His journeys from place to place. All this the result of the union of the two natures in the one Person. Yet in spite of the humiliation and the suffering there was no sin. *Heb.* iv. 15; 2 *Cor.* v. 21.

III. The Holy Ghost unites the outward and inward parts in the Blessed Sacrament.

a. The Consecration of the elements is by the power of the HOLY GHOST. All Sacraments

are modes of His working. Of themselves they are nothing ; through His power they are real, life-giving. *S. John* vi. 63. So in many liturgies He is invoked to effect the Eucharistic change.

b. This reminds us of the sanctity of the consecrated Elements. Show great care and reverence in handling them.

Keep the fast before, according to the ancient rule of the Church.

IV. The Holy Ghost unites the faithful communicant to our Lord.

a. His work under the last head is a work for the preparation of the Sacrament. He has brought the outward species through all the stages of creation and development ; till the host and the cup are ready for the consecrating words.

He has created, baptized, anointed, ordained the consecrating priest that he may perform the outward action.

Thus He has prepared for the Sacrament.

b. He, too, must prepare the communicant.

Without preparation, the act of Communion will be as valueless to the individual soul as the reception of unconsecrated bread and wine.

Worse ! for it may be a desecration.

All the steps of the preparation must be by the assistance of the Personal Divine

Spirit. Self-examination,—contrition,—confession,—earnest purpose of amendment,—perseverance; none can be done rightly without Him. We must give ourselves to the leading of the Spirit. He will make our preparation good.

Then, through the Sacrament, He effects the union of the soul with GOD. *S. John* vi. 56.

V. The Holy Ghost unites the faithful to each other.

This is our LORD's will. *S. John* xvii. 11, 21 ff. It was so immediately after the descent of the HOLY GHOST. *Acts* iv. 32. Urged upon Christians. *Eph.* iv. 3.

a. This unity is the work of the Spirit.

In Communion the same Gift is bestowed on all; and no two souls are exactly alike. But giving to each soul the particular graces it needs, the HOLY GHOST unites all in harmony.

b. Communicants should remember this, and hold together. Ought to feel there is a real bond, entailing mutual help, encouragement, comfort, rebuke, etc.

It is good to have large Communions, on certain Sundays, that we may realize our fellowship.

Remember chiefly these three things about the Spirit of unity. He unites the outward and

inward parts : thank Him for the gift. He unites the faithful communicant to our LORD : put yourself under His guidance in your preparation and your life. He unites us to each other : pray for more good communicants ; for unity and mutual love among ourselves.

XXVII

Holy Days *

The First Communion of the Apostles

S. Matt. xxvi. 20-30.

When we keep the feast of one of the Twelve, we may remember that he was one who was present at, and took part in, the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament, in the Upper Room.

Think of what he heard and saw that night; the first Eucharist, the first Communion; that we may learn how to come worthily to our Upper Room, the Chancel, the Altar.

I. A word of warning beforehand. 21-25.

Think of Leonardo da Vinci's picture.

What if Jesus were to say that here, before any celebration of the Holy Eucharist! Would it be true of any communicant here?

a. Is not wilful sin in us a betrayal of Jesus? We sit with Him, eat with Him, partake of Him! And yet we can take part with

* The addresses for Holy Days were given, either on the Saint's Day, or before a Saint's Day which fell on a Sunday.

His enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. *Ps.* xli. 9. "The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

b. But there are sinners and sinners.

All who receive Him are sinners, or the Sacrament would not be needed ; but there is a great difference.

(i) Those who are careless, come without real self-examination, so perhaps with sin on their soul, if not on their mind ; without praying for real contrition ; without real intention to resist and overcome sin. This is most sad ; for into their hands He is *betrayed* ; they take Him, not according to His will ; take advantage of His loving trust of them.

"Do not thus treat Him Whom you are holding ; He has not deserved it."

(ii) Those who are penitent, loving ; like Mary Magdalene. Who come *as* sinners, feeling unworthy, longing to be better.

To these Jesus loves to deliver Himself. Try to be among them !

So let this word of warning stir us up to self-knowledge. "Lord, is it I ?"

II. The actual Institution. 26-29.

a. Remember all they heard and saw at that solemn moment, the words and the actions. Did they not fall on their knees as Jesus came round to one after the other ?

b. We hear and see the same.

JESUS is present at our Altar ; He it is that works.

You see a priest, but he is only acting as an agent of CHRIST. You hear the same words, and see the same actions as they did ; and then you believe that JESUS is sacramentally present.

The hour is come. The priest approaches the Altar ; makes the oblation ; gives thanks to the Three in One. He breaks the bread, he says the words ; and angels see their King obedient to the action of His Church. He is in the hands of His priest !

Then follows the Communion of the people. Provided they are communicants, all come who will. It is left to each one's conscience ; scarce any other restraint is on them. You come up of your own free will ; the priest does not come down to you. So the Son of Man is delivered into your hands ! the hands of which kind of sinner ?

It has been said, that if a priest realized what he does in consecrating he would be unable to proceed. If you realized that in stretching out your hand you take the LORD of glory, how would you feel ?

III. What happened afterwards. 30.

a. They sang their hymn of thanksgiving ; went out to Gethsemane. We know what happened there. 40, 41, 43, 56.

But on Easter evening we find them

restored to peace and favour. Sinning afterwards did not prove them to have eaten and drunk unworthily. So we must not be *surprised* if communicants fall into sin, though we must be very *sorry*.

b. It was not that Communion made no difference to them ; for we can see why they fell.

(i) They were too self-confident. 33, 35. The one most confident of himself denied CHRIST. The same thing is one reason for our sad falls.

(ii) They did not watch and pray in the garden. So Communion will not uphold us, unless we watch against temptation ; for it will not free us from temptation ; the devil will not let us alone because we are brought close to JESUS ; just the contrary. *S. Luke* xxii. 31 ; *Ecclus.* ii. 1. And we must pray for help. Falls come, because having prayed earnestly before Communion, we relax afterwards. Not to give thanks, to be careless about *morning* prayers, is a beginning of this.

c. Do not forget the warning of the case of Judas.

Either he fled from the Feast of love.

Or else he received it, meaning to betray JESUS.

Better were it for *that* man if he had never been born !

So the First Communion of CHRIST's friends gives us both warning and comfort. Let us take both to ourselves.

XXVIII

Holy Days

The Conversion needed by Communicants

Acts ix. 1-9 ; *Gal.* i. 23 ff.

S. Paul's conversion—after life—so extraordinary, that might seem no example for us ordinary people.

A fierce persecutor of Christians, on a journey, etc.

Then a great light, etc., etc.

Then he begins to preach the faith he once destroyed : declares Jesus, Whom he persecuted, to be the very Son of God, the Christ. Continues through a long life, till martyrdom.

Yet has lessons for us communicants.

I. Remember how we are warned not to be "hinderers or slanderers of His Word."

See Liturgy, First Exhortation.

Wo This is just what Saul was ; of the Incarnate Pod.

Thssible for Christians to be the same.

commuse who speak against Communion and nicants.

And we communicants, if we behave in such a way as to give others occasion to speak against the Blessed Sacrament. *Rom.* ii. 24. Our conduct may be a hindrance to others, a slander on the power of Holy Communion.

From this Saul was converted ; to become a helper—a preacher of the Word.

II. Conversion. *S. Matt.* xviii. 3.

See how the true doctrine of conversion applies to us communicants. A sense in which we should *be* converted : a sense in which we are *being* converted.

a. The turning from sin to holiness, darkness to light, self to God.

(i) Remember it is turning, not being turned. *S. Matt.* xviii. 3 ; *S. Luke* xxii. 32 ; *Acts* iii. 19, R.V.

No man can turn but by the help of the Holy Spirit. But the "conversion" is an act of man's will, not an irresistible impulse. So it was in Saul ; he was not forced to say, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?"

(ii) No communicant should need this conversion. Should have preceded Communion. Otherwise we come unworthily.

Many of the regenerate are unconverted. To come to Holy Communion without "turning" would "*increase* your damnation."

So we ought to be able to take it for granted that each communicant is "converted": has repented of past sin, is fighting against sin, watching carefully his daily life, grieving over falls, confessing them with sorrow, etc. But there is

b. "Another and more blessed conversion."

We are not only to turn, but to "become as little children": "to go from strength to strength." The gradual turning of the whole heart and will to GOD.

Some of the baptized do not need conversion in the first sense; never forfeit GOD's favour, never kill the soul by mortal sin, or continued carelessness. But they need this second kind; and so too in all communicants this turning of the entire soul to GOD should be going on. Signs of this will be:

(i) Gradual weaning of the heart from earthly things; and most of all from self, and love of one's own way. JESUS only.

(ii) Increase of faith in the unseen.

(iii) More complete and voluntary submission of our will to the sovereign will of GOD.

We see this going on in a long and trying sickness sometimes.

But no reason why it should not go on in health. Remember that "except ye . . . become as little children," was the answer of JESUS to the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

This gradual conversion is what good Communions will bring about. As long as we persevere in coming rightly it is going on. Dissatisfaction with yourself is a sign of it.

And it is union with JESUS that will gradually bring about that entire change. 2 *Cor.* iii. 17, 18.

XXIX

Holy Days

The Presentation of Christ, and Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary

S. Luke ii. 22-24.

A double name for this Feast.

The Redeemer was redeemed. Jesus, being a first-born Son, must be taken to the Temple, presented to God, and redeemed.

The pure Virgin was purified. She, whose Son was not conceived and born in sin, went at same time for her purification.

I. The Presentation.

a. The ceremony. *Exod.* xiii. 2, 13; *Num.* iii. 11-13. In memory of the great deliverance when the first-born of Egypt were slain.

This presentation of Christ to the Father was the first perfect act of worship by man. The Son of God, made Man, offers Himself by the hands of the Jewish priest.

For this the Temple was rebuilt and beautified; *Hag.* ii. 7-9.

Men had been coming to GOD with their sacrifices; but had nothing really worth offering to GOD; until GOD provided Himself a lamb, His own SON, the perfect Oblation.

b. This we carry on in the Holy Eucharist.

(i) It is not only a Sacrament, a means of grace. But has its sacrificial side; so is a great act of worship.

In a mystery we make the same oblation as our great High Priest is making in heaven; the oblation of Him Who on earth offered a perfect life to the FATHER; crowned it by a willing death.

Of this we make the remembrance before GOD. It is a presentation of CHRIST to the Eternal FATHER.

(ii) It is also a presentation of ourselves. This is part of the great offering. "Here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies," etc. Never forget this aspect of your Communion. It is a giving of yourself to our LORD.

II. The Purification.

This may help us in our preparation for the great offering.

a. The law of purification. *Lev*. xii. 6-8.

The woman came to be purified, because of *Psalm* li. 5. Also to give thanks. Her two offerings expressed these two things.

The burnt offering, the offering of worship

and thanksgiving. This was to be a lamb, unless she was too poor.

The sin offering, the atonement for original sin. This was the same to all.

b. The lesson to communicants.

The Blessed Virgin came like a penitent. As her Son afterwards came to John the Baptist ; *S. Matt.* iii. 13-15. We, too, must come as penitents.

(i) She came with a sin offering.

When we come to God there must always be the offering of penitential sorrow. *Ps.* li. 17. An offering which will be accepted because of the offering of perfect contrition in Gethsemane.

This is the same to rich and poor ; our worldly condition makes no difference in the requirement of true repentance. All were redeemed with the same price. King and beggar must alike repent.

(ii) She came with a burnt offering, a creature wholly given to God.

So we ought to come to God, prepared to dedicate our lives wholly to Him, a living sacrifice.

When a lamb could not be got, as in the Blessed Virgin's case, then a bird would do. So each must give to God according to his power ; He will accept what we can give Him in our present state.

But the bird was acceptable only from real poverty. So what we offer to God must be the best possible ; not part of our life kept

back from Him, one sin not given up. Let it be, "She hath done what she could."

Let these two great thoughts help us to come rightly.

We come to present ourselves to the LORD.

We must seek purification through the Precious Blood before we come.

Collect for the day. Collect for Purity.

XXX

Holy Days

S. John the Baptist preparing for Christ

S. Matt. iii. 1-10.

S. John had to prepare for the first coming of Christ; His coming among men in the flesh. By the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, Christ's first coming is perpetuated; we show His Death till He come; He dwells among us, in us:

Christ's second coming is anticipated. He comes to us in the Sacrament, Who will come to us in death, in judgment.

And in preparing for Holy Communion, we prepare also for those.

I. S. John's work was to prepare for Christ's first coming.

So may show us how to prepare for His coming in Communion.

S. John was the last of the prophets; there had been a break since Malachi; in S. John the gift renewed.

a. There was a twofold preparation for the Incarnation.

The remote and gradual preparation ; all we read in the Old Testament of GOD's dealings with His people ; by Law, and Prophets, etc.

The immediate ; the six months preaching and work of S. John.

b. There is a twofold preparation for Holy Communion.

All the events and circumstances with which GOD surrounds our life ; and our use or misuse of them. All makes us either more, or less, fit for Communion.

An immediate preparation for each Communion ; not only for our first, but every time we come.

II. This preparation is shown in S. John's work.

a. "Repent ye ; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

(i) Here is the chief motive for penitence. Because in Communion the King is coming to us ; so must be cleansed before He comes.

(ii) The first need is to be cleansed from unforgiven sin by repentance.

It is true that by His coming to us in Communion body and soul are more and more cleansed from all that is evil. Communion is not only food, but medicine too.

But the cleansing through Absolution and through Communion are different. The one is from the *guilt* of sins committed. The other is from the *power* of sin, and from evil habit.

First must come the cleansing from guilt.

Men were stirred up by S. John's preaching; we must stir up ourselves by the help of the HOLY GHOST.

b. The result was that they were baptized in Jordan confessing their sins. The common result of being so stirred. *Acts* xix. 18. It is the natural outpouring of the penitent soul, who confesses to GOD, as child to Father.

But if we believe in Absolution, the result of true penitence will often be sacramental confession. The dislike of confession to a priest, explained as dislike of confessing to man, is often ignorance of the duty of confessing at all. Communicants ought to be quite clear about this.

III. Our conduct after Communion.

S. John teaches us, not only preparation, but also what should follow. *vv.* 7-9; *S. Luke* iii. 10-14.

a. The Pharisees were willing to appear as penitents with the rest; but they must show worthy fruits of penitence. They said in self-confidence, "Abraham is our father"; and thought they were safe.

A not uncommon thing to rest on our position, our privileges. To think that being communicants we are all right.

See how CHRIST answers such ideas. *S. Matt.* v. 22 ff; viii. 12; xxi. 31.

b. He bids us check the first motions of sin; whether excuseful pride, anger, impurity, or any other root of bitterness. "*Begin* not to say *within* yourselves." "A moment of time" was enough for our LORD's temptation to worldly honour. A good thing to stop the wrong word before it falls from the lips; better still to stifle it within.

c. He advises people according to their temptations, publicans, soldiers, etc.

It is part of true repentance to wish to do something as evidence of our change. So after confession, not only comfort, but counsel.

So to all; self-denial for the good of others, for selfishness is at the root of most sins.

To each class: resistance of the special temptations of that class.

IV. "Behold the Lamb of God!"

There came a moment when S. John could say this to the prepared men.

So when preparation, special and general, is finished with the "Comfortable Words," there comes, "Lift up your hearts." Behold the Lamb of GOD.

Behold Him in the heavenly worship; *Rev.* v.

6, 11-14. Lift up your hearts, and join with angels and archangels!

Behold Him, Who in your Communion comes to you to take away your sins! For this is a great purpose of Communion; that He may take away our sins, and fill us with His graces.

Consider, then, and carry out, the preparation taught us by S. John.

Remember how two men, who had gone through it, and then had JESUS pointed out to them, went and "abode with Him that day." *S. John* i. 35-39. So should it be for us; not on our Communion days only, but always. "Abide in Me, and I in you."

XXXI

Holy Days

Ecce Agnus Dei

S. John i. 29 ; 35.

In a great part of the Church, the celebrant, when about to administer the Blessed Sacrament, holding up the Host says, "Behold the Lamb of God," etc.

This may serve to give us thoughts about the Blessed Sacrament in connection with the feast of S. John the Baptist.

For this was the second part of his message. When he had carried out his work of preparing the people by preaching repentance, the moment came when he could say, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

So when we have completed our preparation there comes the moment when the priest turns round to offer to us the Lamb of God.

Think what the words mean, then.

I. Behold!

a. In what sense are we to behold?

(i) Not in the sense that we can see Him with our eyes.

> "Faith alone, though sight forsaketh,
> Shows true hearts the mystery."

Nor in the sense in which you point to a picture and say, "See our LORD on the Cross!" or, "Behold the Good Shepherd!" These remind us of JESUS, of facts about Him; may make them more vivid to us. But that is all. Our prayers may be *helped* by looking at the picture, but are not more *acceptable* because of it.

(ii) In a real spiritual sense we are to behold Him; a higher sense than when we speak of a picture.

The Host does not simply *remind* us of the Body of CHRIST. It is a Sacrament, consisting of two parts, the outward and the inward. The HOLY GHOST has made it the Body of CHRIST.

The Bread which we see is a sign, but of an inward reality. That is the outward part; but the inward is as really, though spiritually, present.

b. So the words, "Behold," etc., are said in the same sense as when S. John spoke them; but of a different kind of Presence of the Lamb of GOD; not the natural Presence, but the Sacramental.

When S. John pointed to JESUS, no one could *see* that He was the Lamb. His Godhead was hidden; but if not GOD, He could not be the Sacrifice. But they could believe, follow, adore.

And "Behold!" should make us feel that we are in a Presence, mysterious, wonderful (not as when before a picture); beyond

our senses; but filling us with hope, love, and adoration.

II. The Lamb of God.

There is in this title a double idea, sacrifice and meekness; an "inestimable benefit," and "an ensample of godly life." *Collect for Second Sunday after Easter.* The former the prominent idea in the Holy Eucharist.

a. JESUS is the Lamb that was sealed by the FATHER. *S. John* vi. 27. Slain as a Sacrifice on the Cross.

In Him is the fulfilment of Gen. xxii. 8.

He is "the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us."

The daily sacrifice of the Jews but a type of Him.

So, Behold Him Who died for us on the Cross.

b. He appears as the Lamb also in the heavenly worship. *Rev.* v. 6, etc. Is called by this title twenty-six times in the Revelation.

So He as the Lamb is always being offered in heaven, by Himself as the great High Priest.

c. These words, the Lamb of GOD, remind us, then, of the great Sacrifice, a remembrance of which we make before GOD.

We have, as it were, said to GOD, "Behold," etc.

And then as this Sacrament is not only a remembrance of the Sacrifice, but also for Communion, it is said to us, "Behold!" "Draw near!"

III. Which taketh away the sin of the world.

Him we receive, that He may take away our sins.

a. He has taken away the guilt of our sins upon the Cross. 1 *Pet.* i. 18 ff.

Take care that when you make your Communion you are in union with the Lamb in this, by true repentance. He did not suffer and die that we might take it easy. Let there be no mean, slothful saying, "CHRIST has done it all."

b. He would take away our sins from us altogether by means of union with Himself in the Blessed Sacrament. This is one great purpose of Communion. "That our sinful bodies may be made clean," etc.

Look to Him in Communion for this; both generally, and for particular sins. He can take them away if you are really in earnest in your wish to get rid of them. So can He make you like Himself, the Lamb of GOD.

So consider from this message of S. John the Baptist, that JESUS, Who offered Himself on the Cross, is really present in this Holy Sacrament.

That He ever liveth to make intercession for you, and that you can join in this through the Holy Eucharist.

That He desires to present you without spot before His FATHER; so let Him take away all your sins.

That hereafter you may be found among that great multitude who stand before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands.

XXXII

Holy Days

The Prophecy of Malachi

Mal. iii. 1-6.

S. John the Baptist is the great Preparer for Christ. One of the Lessons for his Feast contains the prophecy, "Behold I send My messenger," etc. See what Malachi, "the messenger" according to his name, has for us to learn; what he says of Christ's coming to us in the Blessed Sacrament.

I. "The Lord whom ye seek," etc.

a. Plainly a prophecy concerning our Lord.

(i) "The Lord, Whom ye seek" ought to be true of all coming to Communion; of all who love His appearing; as it was true of some at His first coming. *S. Luke* ii. 25, 38.

"The messenger," or angel, "of the covenant," also refers to Christ.

(ii) Gives us something to consider about ourselves.

Is He the Lord Whom *we* seek? To seek God is used of true loving service of

Him. *Ps.* lxiii. 1 ; xxvii. 9 ; cv. 4. And to seek Him rightly is to find Him. *S. Matt.* vii. 7.

Is He the One *we* delight in ? *Ps.* i. 2 ; xxxvii. 4 ; *Cant.* ii. 3.

Our coming to Communion should be a real seeking of Him, our great delight.

b. This LORD shall suddenly come to His temple.

Had its literal fulfilments in our LORD's life. *S. Luke* ii. 22, 46 ; *S. John* ii. 13 ff.

Has a meaning for us when we remember that we are the temples of the living GOD. CHRIST spoke of His Body as a temple. *S. John* ii. 21. And so it is said of His members. 1 *Cor.* iii. 16 ; vi. 19. We are temples of the HOLY GHOST, and to these JESUS comes in our Communions. So these first words may be said to the good communicant.

II. "But who may abide the day of His Coming?" etc.

Speaks to *us* first of the great and awful Day.

And even CHRIST's first coming resulted in judgment. *S. John* iii. 18 ; ix. 39. A sifting of men's characters.

a. Has its meaning with regard to Holy Communion. That is a real coming of CHRIST to us ; so may well say, " Who may abide ?" etc. The implied answer is, No one, on his

own merits! None can dare to say, "I am worthy."

b. So we must always come in the spirit of the Prayer of Humble Access. Having done our best to fulfil the conditions on which we are allowed to approach. Remembering that the Presence of GOD always causes a judgment. Every communicant comes in grace or out of grace; in GOD's favour or under His wrath. We must not judge others, for we cannot; but He can.

III. "For He is like a refiner's fire," etc.

a. This sets our LORD before us as the One Who shall cleanse us from dross and corruption. Two kinds of cleansing spoken of: by fire, where the dross is all mixed up with the metal; by fuller's soap, where the defilement is more on the surface. "To those who sin gravely He is a refining and a consuming fire; to those who commit lighter sins, He is fuller's soap to restore cleanness to it when washed."—*S. Jerome.*

He carries on this, like the refiner of silver, till He can see His image clear in us, the dross being cleared away; till we come to be like Him, Whose raiment at the Transfiguration "was exceeding white as snow," etc.

b. This is to be the effect of good regular Communion.

It is not a reward for the perfect; but

a means to perfection. To all who come to Him there He shall be as the fire and the soap. To those who come carelessly, 1 *Cor.* xi. 30. To those that come rightly, yet have many sins to overcome. To the very best that come, more and more cleansing the soul to perfect whiteness.

IV. "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem," etc.

Here is the result of His refining work. "They shall offer unto the LORD offerings in righteousness."

The word for offerings means the meal-offering, the special type of the Holy Eucharist; referring us to *Mal.* i. 11.

a. The work of JESUS upon us through Communion makes us fit to go on offering this great Sacrifice. Communion prepares for Communion. He Who is "the LORD our Righteousness" will impart His righteous- to us.

b. Following on this is the promise, "Then shall the offering of Judah," etc. No gifts are acceptable from those wilfully living in unrighteousness. *Isa.* i. 13. It shall be "as in the days of old," etc., when the Holy Eucharist had its right place in the worship of the Church of England.

V. It ends with what we may take as a warning: ℣℣. 5, 6.

a. "I will come near," etc.
Do not say, "These are not *my* sins." It ends, "That fear not Me": a main source of all sin, absence of the fear of GOD.

b. The reason why we have been spared so long. "I am the LORD," etc. GOD is not as one of us; so soon weary of the waywardness and wickedness of others. But He remains the same; and His goodness calls us to repentance.

So consider these points:—

1. Communion should be sought as an object of desire.

2. To be ready for His coming we must be humble penitents.

3. His purpose is to cleanse us from all our sins.

4. Good communicants make an acceptable Eucharist.

5. Beware lest He have to judge and condemn.

Make a prayer on each of these heads.

XXXIII

Holy Days

S. Peter the Communicant

S. Peter is an example and a warning to us all, when our Lord calls us to feast with Him at His Table.

Consider to-night what we may learn from him.

I. S. Peter at his First Communion.

He was one of that little company who gathered together in the upper room that night. Think what he saw and heard.

a. The washing of his feet. *S. John* xiii. 6-10.

Jesus taught him that though he did not need a bath, he did need to have his feet washed.

Shows us that we need a cleansing, though we have not fallen away from God. So let there be careful self-examination, for venial sins, as well as greater.

b. The Institution of the Sacrament. *S. Matt.* xxvi. 26, etc.

Think what he saw and heard : what he then received.

Did the discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum come into his mind ? a discourse he could not have forgotten. *S. John* vi. 67-69.

At every Eucharist imagine yourself in that room ; believe as S. Peter believed ; receive as he received.

II. S. Peter after His Communion.

They went out ; and that was a night of tremendous trial.

a. In Gethsemane, and in the Palace. *S. Mark* xiv. 37 ff ; 66-72.

He went to sleep when Jesus asked him to watch.

He was eager to defend Jesus, but then fled with the rest.

He was taken unawares, denied, and then held to it.

This was one who had just been communicated ; a grave scandal !

b. What does it say to us ?

Not that the falls of communicants do not matter. We must think of them with charity, while we grieve.

But to each of us it says, Be careful ! Satan desires to have you !

We, too, are likely to be slothful and sleepy in effort, to forget our good resolutions, to be afraid of others. Remember,

our conduct may be a dishonour to Him we love, a scandal to His Church.

III. The cause of S. Peter's fall.

a. His fault lay in neglect of warning : self-confidence : neglect of prayer.

b. We may well examine ourselves about these.

(i) Warnings come to us, not only from others, but chiefly through experience of past falls, —brought home to us by the HOLY SPIRIT. But we quickly forget how it was before ; think it will not be so this time.

(ii) Self-satisfaction often follows quick on Communion ; have made an effort ; have done what some have not ; and so comes self-confidence. In holy fear we must live.

(iii) Want of prayer arises from self-confidence. The deep humble sense of weakness, the feeling that danger to the soul may arise at any moment, makes us earnest, persevering in prayer.

IV. S. Peter's restoration.

a. In spite of his fall, he was forgiven ; CHRIST appeared to him first of the Apostles. He was trusted again, and restored to his work for CHRIST ; *S. John* xxi. 15, etc. But, remember ! a bitter repentance had gone between.

b. Past falls are not to keep us back from Communion.

> They must be sorrowed over deeply; but they do not make us incapable of service, even of high things. GOD can even make them serve to good in the end, if we learn from them to be humble, to mistrust self, and trust GOD.

So from S. Peter we communicants may take both warning and encouragement, fear and hope.

XXXIV

Holy Days

S. Mary Magdalene

S. Luke vii. 37 ff. ; *S. John* xix. 25 ; xx. 16 ff.

The Church commemorates a woman who was a great sinner, and is a great saint. Take her character and actions to give us thoughts in preparation for Communion.

I. Our knowledge of her a great help to communicants.

a. A woman, who had been a notorious sinner, in close fellowship with our Lord ; ministering to Him of her substance ; present at His death ; specially favoured at His resurrection.

If we are really good communicants, we must sometimes think, How can it be right for *me* to come ? The more we love God, the more conscious of sin we become, the more we feel our infirmities, our backslidings, how little we do for Him.

But we find we are not shut out ; the

Church does not impose lifelong penances now.

b. We see what we must go through to become so close to JESUS; and what we must be like as the result of this.

(May we take her, as many do, as identical with Mary of Bethany?)

II. We find her at our Lord's feet.

a. In the Pharisee's house; in her penitence.

Put away thoughts of the greatness of her *sins*: think of the greatness of her *penitence*, and its *results*. The same spirit there must be in our penitence; for she is an example to all, not only to those first turning from sin to GOD. We cannot always have such emotion; but we can go to JESUS in the spirit of

(i) Contrition, loving sorrow; shown, as JESUS told Simon, by what she did. Her tears and kisses all showed love, grief.

(ii) Humility. She stood behind, out of sight as much as possible; kissed His *feet*.

In us there must be no thought of others, whether they are more or less fit than we are; or may be like Simon the Pharisee.

And sometimes we may feel that we can, as it were, only stand behind Him weeping, not sit at meat with Him. Then do not stay outside; come as near Him as you dare; in sorrow for unfitness, prayer to be more fit for Communion.

(iii) Self-sacrifice.

She uses for the honouring of JESUS the very things she had abused in Satan's service.

There must be a willingness to give up for His sake all that has led us into sin ; to yield up all our powers and faculties to the service of JESUS.

(iv) The result to us will be the same. Remember what she heard JESUS say, of her, and to her. We ought to hear this from JESUS. By the assurance of our conscience, if GOD grant us that. 1 *S. John* iii. 21. By the Absolution of CHRIST's Church.

b. At the foot of the Cross, in company with S. Mary and S. John.

She teaches the communicant to have devotion to the Passion of JESUS. This equally for the newly-converted sinner, and the greatest of saints.

Could we not make more use of our Fridays ?

c. At His feet on Easter morning.

And Communion may be always like an Easter morn to the communicant. "I will raise him up at the Last Day." "Preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life."

III. She is always being found fault with.

Simon the Pharisee scorned her. [Martha complained of her. So did Judas.] Under the Cross we may be sure she heard hard words. When she brought news of the

empty tomb she was not believed by some. Must have been hard to bear.

It is a mark of communicants to be spoken against, for doing what is according to the command of CHRIST. Take care that the fault-finding be not just. If not, we can leave it to our LORD to vindicate us. "Thou shalt answer for me." To bear it patiently may be part of the training we need.

He Who by His HOLY SPIRIT wrought on Mary Magdalene can, through union with Himself, turn us sinners into saints.

XXXV

Holy Days

Nathanael coming to Christ

S. John i. 45-51.

What we know of this saint is how he came to Jesus. So he may help us in preparing for our Communion.

I. Coming to Holy Communion is a coming to Jesus.

a. Holy Communion is the gift of our Lord Himself to His people.

It is not a mere ordinance; not merely something to remind us of Him; not merely a way in which He works.

But it is the true Bread from heaven, which is Jesus Christ.

b. To come to Communion is to come to Jesus.

Men talk vaguely about "coming to Jesus"; are often those who neglect the chief way of coming that Jesus has given us. *This* is the definite coming to Jesus, which includes all else, if it is done *duly*.

We come to Him in faith, in love, in penitence, in prayer. All these are included in a right coming to Communion.

It is the highest way on earth by which we can come to Him.

c. When we are called to come, then, it is like the call that came to Nathanael. It comes to us through CHRIST'S Church; and the call is, "We have found Him!" JESUS of Nazareth, a Man like ourselves, yet our GOD too. So one who can be to us a guide to the perfect life, a strength to enable us, a rest to our souls. We have found Him, all this and more, in the Blessed Sacrament.

II. All was not plain and easy to Nathanael. ℣. 46.

This was no cavil of one anxious to find fault; but the honest difficulty of a simple man; knowing the CHRIST was to be born in Bethlehem; knowing the character of Nazareth.

a. Faith is required for the true doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament.

The simplicity and lowliness of it is a difficulty to some. Though people hardly acknowledge it to themselves, it is hard to them to believe it can really do them good.

The whole system of media is a stumbling-block to men's pride.

As with Naaman; 2 *Kings* v. 10-12. Can any real good to the soul come from bread and wine? Face this thought!

b. Nathanael's difficulty arose from a mistake. He did not know the actual truth about JESUS. He was really from Bethlehem ; and the SON of GOD ; though to men only "JESUS of Nazareth."

So the difficulty about the Blessed Sacrament arises from only considering the outward part, bread and wine.

But JESUS has said of it, "This is My Body," etc. And what good may not be looked for from this ?

c. The answer to our doubts is, Come and see !

There need be no argument. To be in CHRIST'S Presence will suffice.

This is the best answer to those who doubt : Make fair trial !

This is what we may say to those who do not come. This our lives ought to say : Come and see what makes us different, more like JESUS CHRIST. At least, come and see where we get comfort and strength.

III. The character of the communicant. ℣. 47.

JESUS sees us drawing near to Communion ; what can He say of us as we come ?

This He desires to say of each one who comes :

An Israelite indeed ! a true member of the Church, faithful to his covenant with GOD.

In whom is no guile ! Sincere in the motives for which we come.

Not without sin ; but not dissembling our

sins, to self, to God, to His Priest. With an honest intention to live a good life.

IV. The first thing Nathanael found about our Lord. *v.* 48.

That he had come to One Who knew his inner life. Commonly supposed that he had been opening his heart to God in secret. But Tissot represents "under the fig tree" as meaning his being in undesirable company, when Jesus passed by.

a. A useful thought before Communion, that all things are naked and opened to Him with Whom we have to do. We come to One Who knows us, has seen us wherever we have been. Cf. *S John* iv. 29.

A solemn thought; urging us to self-examination, self-knowledge. For it is no use trying to deceive Him.

A comforting thought; for we can appeal to His judgment, which is both just and merciful. *Ps.* lxi. 1. Penitent sinners may come without fear of the sneers of men. They have seen us foolish, sinful, but not in our penitence; but Jesus has seen this too.

b. The finding he was known like this led Nathanael to confess Jesus as the Son of God; *v.* 49.

Let the feeling that we are known like this help us to remember that it is to One Who is true God that we come. An awful

thing for sinners to come so close to God. But He has said, "Come unto Me!"

And if we come to Jesus like Nathanael, then He will be able to show us greater things. The reward of our faith and penitence will be a fuller revelation of His goodness and greatness, and of the benefits of the Incarnation. We shall find that Jesus, God Incarnate, does indeed join heaven and earth, God and man.

And in our exile, under punishment, apparently alone, we shall find, as Jacob did, that we are at the very threshold of heaven, with God's glory streaming round. *Gen.* xxviii. 16 ff.

XXXVI

Holy Days

Ministering Spirits

Heb. i. 13, 14.

The holy angels are here spoken of in two ways: λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα, i.e., spirits ministering to God. The word from which Liturgy is derived. Used, *Heb.* x. 11, of the ministry of the priests under the Law of Moses.

εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα κ. τ. λ., i.e., sent out to do service to the heirs of salvation.

This gives many thoughts to communicants. For we ought to be like angels in many ways. "Thy will be done," etc. See *Michaelmas Collect.* The text tells us what they are; and so what we ought to be as communicants; what we cannot be without Communion.

I. Ministering spirits; in worship.

a. They are ceaselessly occupied in the worship of God; in all parts of it.

This shown by Cherubim being over the Mercy-seat; embroidered on the hangings of the Sanctuary.

Isaiah saw the Seraphim engaged in worship. *Isa.* vi.

The angelic song at the Birth of CHRIST. *Heb.* i. 6.

The heavenly worship seen by S. John, of the Eternal Trinity. *Rev.* iv. Of the Lamb. *Rev.* v.

So frequently in Revelation; bearing incense; sounding trumpets; bearing the book, etc.

So now in our Eucharistic worship; "Therefore with angels," etc.

Such worshipping spirits they have been since they were created; they were "Sons of GOD" before they were "Messengers." *Job* xxxviii. 7. They always see GOD's face, so always worship.

b. To us they say that to be like them we must be worshippers of the Three in One, of the Incarnate SON of GOD.

Remember when we come to the Holy Eucharist we come to minister to GOD. To perform unto Him the highest act of worship men can give. In the Eucharist is contained all kinds of worship; Offering; Praise; Thanksgiving; Prayer.

Moreover we offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, to GOD; as the angels are always doing.

Do not forget that for this high and heavenly worship we need the preparation of repentance. *Ecclus.* xv. 9. Remember how carefully the Church impresses this on

us, *First Exhortation*; in the Liturgy, by the Commandments and Kyrie, by the General Confession and Absolution.

Ritual, however elaborate, is no longer merely formal, when looked on as the orderly ministering to GOD.

So in our worship we may join these ministering spirits.

II. Ministering spirits; in action. His messengers.

a. They minister to GOD in another sense; i.e., they do things for GOD throughout the universe. *Ps.* ciii. 21.

In the powers of nature. *Ps.* civ. 4, R. V.; 1 *Chron.* xxi. 14 ff; 2 *Kings* xix. 35.

In giving the Law. *Acts* vii. 53; *Gal.* iii. 19.

In messages to men throughout the Old and New Testament.

b. We, too, must minister to GOD, as His servants, in action.

(i) By our ordinary daily work.

Thousands of things have to be done, that men may live, multiply, replenish the earth; that "the world may go on." These are all GOD's work, when done in the right way, for the right motive. So in all we do we may be "ministering." Heaven is the Holy of Holies, but this earth is the Holy Place. *Isa.* vi. 3.

(ii) By the work of the Church.

Many things connected with the religious life of the people. Clergy cannot, and ought not, to do them all. Serving at Altar; singing in choir; ringing bells; Sunday School; missionary work; staying with the sick; helping another to church; reading to those who cannot read, etc. Every one can do something; and every communicant ought.

III. Sent forth to do service . . . heirs of salvation.

This is part of their ministry unto GOD; but it is also a service to men; especially to those within the covenant.

a. Think specially of the angel guardians; each sent forth to do service to some particular child of GOD. Two things they give us.

(i) Guardianship against evil. *Ps.* xci. 11. Jacob returning to Canaan. Elisha surrounded by the Syrians. *Ps.* xxxiv. 7. So equally now; in dangers ghostly and bodily.

(ii) Suggestion of good. If angels could speak to men openly, why not as spirit to spirit, as agents of the HOLY SPIRIT? If evil angels can make suggestions to us, why not the holy angels!

b. We, too, are sent into this world,—placed in our own particular circumstances,—not only to save our own souls, but to do service to

our fellow-heirs; each one to those first near whom GOD has placed him. The same two things we may try to do.

(i) Guardianship. Especially to the young; trying to keep them out of evil; upholding them, standing by them in temptation.

(ii) Suggestion of good.

By word. Never be afraid to speak. You may think you are the only one, but some weak one may be glad.

By example. Never be afraid to seem as good as you are, to let it be known that you wish to be better.

Remember, then:

The angels were ministering spirits before there were any men to minister to. Sons of GOD before they were Messengers. It is the living in GOD's Presence, the constant sight of Him by faith, the regular worship of Him, that will keep us constant in doing His will.

XXXVII

Holy Days

Michaelmas Collect, Epistle, and Gospel

Michaelmas brings us the thought of God's holy angels; those spirits who are ever worshipping God, ever ministering to us, who are able and willing to help us, in our worship, in our daily life.

The Michaelmas portion of the Liturgy may help us in our preparation for our Worship and Communion.

I. The Collect.

God has ordained the services of angels and men in a wonderful order. He Who created both has ordered and combined their work; so that both in unison, heaven and earth, may minister to His glory.

a. The worship which gives glory to God is an associated worship of angels and men.

When we read of the heavenly worship, we find the angels worshipping the Eternal Trinity. *Rev.* iv. 8. The Lamb of God, the Son of God Incarnate. *Rev.* v. 11-13.

When we men on earth join in the

Liturgy, we, too, worship the Eternal Trinity in the *Sanctus*; the Lamb of God in *Gloria in Excelsis*. All in the Liturgy is addressed to God the Father; except some Collects, and part of the *Gloria*. But we give special adoration to Jesus sacramentally present.

Just as, when Christ was born, the angels sang "Glory to God," in heaven; the Babe of Bethlehem was worshipped on earth by Shepherds and Magi.

b. In our worship we do what the angels cannot do, what they have no need to do. We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus. Our act of worship is not *perfect* without this. For to worship God aright, to make duly the remembrance of the great Sacrifice, we must be in union with Him Who offers it, our great High Priest. "Our Lord cannot be our representative Priest and Sacrifice in an effective sense unless we go on to share His life. . . . Only in Christ can we offer and plead Christ." —Gore, *The Body of Christ*, p. 200 ff.

Our Eucharistic worship, then, is a taking our place in the order of angels and men, worshipping according to the will of God.

II. The Epistle.

The war of angels and men with evil.

Resulting in victory, in heaven: "Now is come salvation," etc. On earth: "He knoweth that he hath but a short time."

a. We communicants are to look, not for peace, but for war. The devil rages against the Church, as long as he has any power left. His assault takes different forms in different ages.

Part of our duty to be always waging war, first against the evil within ourselves, then against the evil around us. Remember we must use spiritual weapons, not natural. 2 *Cor.* x. 3 ff. And that war entails suffering, which we must not shrink from. 2 *Tim.* ii. 3.

b. To do this successfully we must have peace within. And so we need another thing which the angels do not need, penitence. No peace without penitence! Sin spoils our peace with GOD and man. Without pardon we cannot be at peace.

Seek pardon for sin in true repentance, that you may have a true well-founded peace. And having inward peace we can fight with hope and courage.

III. The Gospel.

The special Michaelmas verse is the last: "Their angels do always behold the face of My FATHER."

a. Sets before us communion with GOD. The pure in heart shall see Him. Our lives would be very different if the closeness of GOD were a real thing to us. We must try to walk by faith, not by sight. Not easy; but we must practise living in

the consciousness of GOD's Presence. Recollection will come by degrees.

b. Must not forget what leads up to this in the Gospel.

(i) Humility. The lesson from the little child set in the midst. The more needful for us, who by Communion are raised so high. "We do not presume," etc.

(ii) Avoiding scandal. "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones . . . to stumble." R.V. Woe to the world! Woe to the man who causes the temptation! Communicants must always have the fear of this before their eyes. Think how often the conduct of communicants is made an excuse for those who do not come to Communion. *Rom.* ii. 24.

(iii) Must cut off occasions of sin for oneself. "If thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble," etc. This is a parabolic saying; but as "the eternal fire" points to some awful consequences, so cutting off the hand, etc., must mean some very real and painful surrender; which probably we have made needful for ourselves, by giving way to temptation often.

So we are to be associated with the holy angels: in worship, in war against evil, in communion with GOD; trying to do our part, they helping us, we shall take our right place in that order of created things, which is for the glory of GOD.

XXXVIII

Holy Days

The Revelation to the Angels through the Church

Eph. iii. 8-11, R.V.

We are well accustomed to think of what we can learn from the holy angels. What S. Michael, S. Gabriel, S. Raphael can teach us, by their names and by their work. What our guardian angel suggests to us in his care for our salvation.

Do we ever think that the angels have something to learn from us?

And so that we have a duty to them, besides the duty of love and gratitude, and obedience to their promptings.

That through us they may learn fully the mysteries of God's love and purposes for mankind; because we, if good communicants, are united to our Lord, God Incarnate.

I. Consider the words of S. Paul.

a. S. Paul had had grace given him to preach to the Gentiles: so that all men might come to know the mystery of God's great purpose

in CHRIST, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, etc. ; *v.* 6.

And that the principalities, etc., might come to know, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of GOD ; shown in all that has been done, and is being done through JESUS CHRIST, and in His members. See also 1 *Tim.* iii. 16 ; 1 *Pet.* i. 12.

What they are learning is how the whole creation is gathered up into our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

b. This is being unfolded to them by degrees.

First, GOD's plan of the Incarnation seems to have been made known to them.

Then, "Let all the angels of GOD worship Him!" they saw in that little Child in the manger their King.

In the wilderness, and in all His earthly life, they must have watched with awe and wonder.

Then there came a veiling of the Godhead in the Passion and Death.

Then the veil lifted when their King rose again, and in His human nature entered the highest heavens.

c. Ever since then they have been watching the unfolding of GOD's purpose in the Church of CHRIST.

As the mystical Body of CHRIST grows by degrees ; as each saint is gathered safely into the fold ; the many purposes of the Incarnation, the marvellous working out of this in man, grows ever clearer to the angels.

Every Baptism, every sinner that repenteth and is absolved, above all every good Communion, shows the angels more fully the manifold wisdom of GOD. Until JESUS comes again to take home His Bride.

And so the Church of CHRIST is teaching them.

II. What is true of the Church should be true of each member.

As it is GOD's purpose to bring His Church wholly into union with JESUS CHRIST, so it is His purpose to bring each soul to the likeness of CHRIST. Only so can the whole Church be brought. *Rom.* viii. 29 ; 2 *Cor.* iii. 18 ; *Gal.* iv. 19 ; *Eph.* iv. 13. This is part of the mystery which the angels are watching. Each Christian has something special to teach them.

a. Think of your guardian angel watching you, that he may learn how a soul is gradually brought to the image of CHRIST.

(i) This among us can only be the case with communicants.

Neglect of Communion by us must at once stop our growth.

No growth where there is not real life ; and, "Except ye eat . . . ye have no life in you." Just as when one hates ; 1 *S. John* iii. 15.

We must seek CHRIST's indwelling in His own way.

(ii) Think, then, how your guardian desires to

watch the features of CHRIST growing in your soul. Watching every prayer, action, word, choice of right or wrong, fall and rising again ; seeing the effects of companionship, circumstance, change, place.

As long as the soul goes on right the angel learns from it ; he marvels at the wonders of GOD's grace ; who out of a sinner can make a saint ; continuing the work even after death ; till He brings the soul to its final consummation and bliss.

Imagine the angel of S. Paul or S. John.

Think whether your guardian angel is so learning from you ;

b. The practical effect on our lives.

Whether the angel can so learn from us or not, depends mainly on whether we are faithful to the vocation wherewith GOD has called us. *Eph.* iv. 1-4.

Our vocation is our place in GOD's plan ; which plan is being gradually unfolded to the angels. So if we are faithful to our part in GOD's plan, we help on this revelation. As each part in a machine has its own work, and its bearing on the rest. We can hinder the whole, having free-will.

May consider our vocation ;

(i) As communicants, to make right use of our LORD's gift.

To do this are necessary, right reception, after due preparation : regularity in coming : consistency in daily life : intercessory prayer,

with a sense of a share in the guilt of other members of the community.

(ii) In our different callings, as fathers, mothers, etc.: in our different works. Whatever your calling, seek grace in your Communion, that you may be the best of your sort.

So "because of the angels" let us try to grow in grace.

They are to be our eternal companions; they are longing to learn; and we can do something to teach them. How otherwise can we requite them for their example and care?

The life of a true communicant is a wonderful revelation to them; for in each of us there is something different.

So they will go on learning from us to the end, till the number of the elect is complete; till each one is brought to the likeness of CHRIST; and the Bridegroom takes home His Bride.

XXXIX

Holy Days

The Communion of Saints realized in Holy Communion

All Saints' Day brings to our minds, "I believe in . . . the Communion of Saints." The very name of our Sacrament, The Holy Communion, makes us think there must be a close connection between the article and the Sacrament.

In coming to Communion we may learn to realize the Communion of Saints, and increase our knowledge of the meaning of the article.

For it expresses in few words all the privileges of which the true members of the Church are partakers; and all these we may find in the Holy Communion.

I. Communion with the Three in One.

1 *S. John* i. 3; iii. 1; 1 *Cor.* i. 9; 2 *Cor.* xiii. 14; *Gal.* iv. 6 ff.

This may be realized in the Sacrament.

a. All three Persons have their part in the Sacrament.

We offer the Son to the Father, and the

Spirit gives the power to do so. We are doing the will of the Three, working with God.

b. When we make our Communion, it is not Jesus only Who comes to us. We could not receive God through a Sacrament were it not for the Incarnation of God the Son. But Father and Spirit are inseparably united to the Son. And so Jesus says, *S. John* xiv. 23.

c. It is by faith, hope, and love that we have communion with God; without these it is impossible.

In Communion is found a high expression of each of these. Without faith the Sacrament *to us* is nothing.

There we hope to have Jesus given to us; and does not this Gift fulfil all hopes?

And what love should there be in return for the love wherewith Jesus gives Himself to us!

II. Communion with the Son of God, made Man.

Well to think of this separately; for through His human nature we are partakers of the Divine nature.

He has taken our human nature and our infirmities, our sins and their curse. We have received of His fullness, and grace for grace.

a. He it is Whom we offer to God. And the worshipper has communion with His sacrifice, for He puts it in His place.

b. He it is Whom we receive. "Eateth My Flesh," etc. "Dwelleth in Me," etc. It is "the Communion of the Body of CHRIST," etc. In receiving Him we ought to realize our membership in CHRIST. See *Thanksgiving Prayer*: "And dost assure us thereby," etc.

III. Communion with the holy Angels.

They certainly have fellowship with the children of GOD. *Heb.* i. 14; xii. 22; *Rev.* xxii. 9. So in the Holy Eucharist we find this, though they cannot receive the Sacrament with us.

a. They join with us in our praises. "Therefore with angels," etc.

b. They rejoice over our penitence. And penitence is needful for every communicant at every Communion; so we must give them joy.

c. They learn with us. We learn, by receiving, to know CHRIST better. They learn more of the mystery by watching us.

IV. Communion with all faithful members of the Church. 1 *S. John* i. 3, 7.

We all benefit by the same ordinances, are endued with the graces of the same Spirit; share in each other's prayers, good works, etc.

a. This we may realize in Communion. 1 *Cor.* x. 17. Whoever we may be, in whatever

part of the world, each receives the same Food.

b. By each Communion our union with CHRIST is renewed. And so, too, our union with one another.

We cannot be joined to the Head, and parted from the other members. This is why charity with all is an absolute necessity; otherwise there is a bar to union.

Remember CHRIST loves even the one who is apart from Him by sin; he is a member, though a sick one.

Communion ought to be a much more real bond between communicants than it is.

V. Communion with the faithful departed. *Heb.* xii. 23.

"If I have communion with a saint of GOD, as such, while he liveth here, I must still have communion with him when he is departed hence; because the foundation of that communion cannot be removed by death."—*Pearson on the Creed*, Art. ix.

a. This, too, we may realize in Communion, for then we commemorate the departed, and bless GOD for them. We pray for them in praying for "all Thy whole Church."

b. They are united to CHRIST, without possibility of change. In Communion we have the same union, though *we* may lose it. So as we communicate we may think of some one we love whom GOD has taken; or of

some great saint whom we hope to see some day ; and, so thinking, may be able to realize how close we are to them at that moment.

So when we are preparing, receiving, giving thanks, trying to live up to our Communion, let us try to realize how little it is a matter for ourselves only. All who care for us are interested in our Communion. GOD Himself, our LORD, etc. Let us try to be worthy of so glorious a fellowship as this !

XL

Holy Days

The Gospel for All Saints' Day

S. Matt. v. 1-12.

The Beatitudes give us the character of the saint; the man who is truly blessed. The saint on earth; for he is still persecuted. Only entirely fulfilled on earth by the King of Saints. But each disciple of Jesus shows these eight marks, in greater or less degree. So we may call it the character of the ideal communicant.

All the baptized are called to be saints. Those who use Communion rightly are trying to fulfil their calling.

The first three Beatitudes give us the Preparation of the communicant; what is needed before he comes.

The next two, the Life of the communicant: what he must show.

The last three, the Effect: what Communion will make him.

I. The Preparation.

a. "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

Poverty, in spirit if not actually, is the first need.

To be poor in spirit is to realize that nothing is our own, and to be willing that it should be so. So to be ready to give up whatever GOD asks of us. Job, though rich in fact, was poor in spirit. See Job i. 21; ii. 10. So was S. Matthew, giving up all at the call of JESUS.

So communicants must be willing to give up anything inconsistent with their profession, any idol, any habit, any occasion of sin. This is hard to carry out to the full, nevertheless it comes at the beginning, or else something may stop our service.

b. "Blessed are they that mourn."

There are many things to mourn over, but sin is at the bottom of them all. And the communicant's mourning is not a vague general thing, but is the result of self-examination, and meditation on the Passion of CHRIST. A mourning which brings him on his knees in confession, leads him to undergo the trouble and shame of sacramental confession.

c. "Blessed are the meek."

Meekness is what we chiefly need to enable us to persevere in amendment of life. *S. Matt.* xi. 29.

Meekness with GOD's way of dealing with

us, which often is very different from what we should choose for ourselves.

Meekness with other people, their ways, and treatment of us. *Ps.* xxxvii. 8.

Meekness with self; not cross and put out when we fail, but humbly sorrowing and trying again.

So these three Beatitudes teach us the spirit that is needful for right Communion.

II. The life of love. *S. John* xiii. 35; xiv. 15.

a. Love to GOD. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness."

This is something beyond mere acquiescing in religion. A longing after holiness, urged by love of GOD.

Some are well satisfied when they have *become* communicants. This is but the beginning. Love will make us long to be better. So we shall go to Communion, to seek to be made righteous, through union with Him Who is the LORD our righteousness. And they who go in this spirit shall be filled.

b. Love to man: "Blessed are the merciful."

We must look on all things as GOD does; and see Psalm cxlv. 9. Communion is not only with GOD but with men. The unmerciful servant, making his Communion, acts a lie. And mercy consists first of

forgiveness, but also of doing good ; active kindness, intercessory prayer, etc.

So these two Beatitudes teach us the principle of the communicant's life.

III. The effect of Communion; i.e., of union with Jesus.

a. "Blessed are the pure in heart."

Purity of heart is something beyond freedom from guilt ; beyond even freedom from actual sin in thought, word, and deed. It is when the heart is set on one thing only, GOD and His will. The same as the "single eye." So every motive right. Good Communions will bring us on to this ; and so gradually fit us for the sight of GOD.

b. "Blessed are the peacemakers."

This should be the description of the communicant as regards his work on others. Earth is full of strife ; heaven alone is perfect peace. But there are some whose life tends to bring heaven on earth. This we ought to be through Communion.

c. "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

The passive side of the communicant's life. This he must expect. If he is united to CHRIST in character, purity ; and in work, peacemaking ; must also be united to Him in suffering. This persecution, which the

craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us, we must accept and use.

So these three Beatitudes teach us the results of Communion, inwardly, and outwardly both in action and endurance.

Meditate on these Beatitudes ; examine yourself by them ; pray that you may come in the spirit of a penitent, and may be changed into a saint.

XLI

Types

The Tree of Life

The natural things of God's creation are often types of spiritual things.

The Tree of Life meets us both at beginning and end of the Bible : in Eden, and in the new heaven and new earth. *Gen.* ii. 9, iii, 22 : Given to man in his innocency ; lost through sin. *Rev.* ii. 7 ; xxii. 2, 14. Given to those who overcome, and wash their robes.

I. The purpose of the Tree of Life.

a. Adam was not meant to die. Would have lived on had he remained innocent. *Wisdom* i. 13 ; ii. 23 ff. By this tree his immortality would be preserved. Some writers have thought that it was for spiritual life, a kind of Sacrament. But undoubtedly we are meant to understand that its purpose was life.

b. So in it there is for all men this lesson, that our life is not independent of outward means. Man has to use things outside himself, in order to keep alive.

The body has to be renewed by lower forms of life, used by GOD according to His will. *Deut.* viii. 3. This is the mystery of food.

The soul, too, needs food, but of a higher kind; the true Bread, the Bread from heaven. *S. John* vi. 32, 35. Can only have its true life through union with GOD.

II. The Tree of Life is a type of our Lord, Who is the Bread from heaven.

a. From Him our souls draw life. *S. John* xv. 1, ff.; vi. 48-51.

In one figure, we are the branches. In the other, those who feed on His fruit; on Him we must feed to have immortality.

And the means, He tells us, is eating His Flesh, and drinking His Blood.

b. So in this world the Holy Communion is our chief way of feeding on the Tree of Life.

(i) It is the pledge and means of immortality, eternal life. *S. John* vi. 54.

The pledge: we might think that GOD never could give us such a wonderful reward. But the gift of Communion in this life is a pledge of the life everlasting.

The means: for it is CHRIST'S own appointed way of feeding on Him.

(ii) As this it is to be used. We are to put out our hand and take it, that we may live for ever. Not only once, but habitually.

III. Man forfeited his right to the Tree of Life by sin.

Driven forth from the Garden, return prevented, that he might not eat, and live for ever. To live on for ever in sin would have been terrible.

a. We forfeit our right in the Blessed Sacrament by sin.

There are no cherubim, no flaming sword, to bar the way. But the danger is great if we approach in sin.

Be clear as to what forfeits our right to it. Not troubles; not the wickedness around us; these may be occasions of sin, but are not sin. Not sinfulness, or none of us could come.

But unrepented sin; habitual sin; not a bad habit which is being fought against, though others may doubt our fitness because of this.

So be careful, earnest, and honest about self-examination.

b. Jesus has opened the way to the Tree of Life.

By His Death He re-opened Paradise. *S. Luke* xxiii. 43.

And so S. John in his vision of the heavenly city saw the Tree again. And heard who may feed on it. Those that overcome, which they cannot do unless they are in union with Him. They that wash their robes, which can only be in the Blood of the Lamb.

So let the Tree of Life remind us :

That we cannot live without JESUS ; and must be partakers of Him in His own way. So come to Him in humility.

That there is one thing, and only one, that unfits us for receiving CHRIST in the Blessed Sacrament—sin. So come to Him in penitence ; for strength to fight continually.

Then, fed on Him Who is our Tree of Life, death cannot touch us. *Rom.* viii. 38 ff.

XLII

Types

Melchizedek

Gen. xiv. 18-20; *Heb.* vii. 1-3.

Melchizedek, king and priest, mysterious in his person, in his actions, well typifies Him Whose Name is Wonderful, Who so mysteriously feeds us in His holy Sacrament. We see a shadow both of that blessed Feast, and of Him Who gives it.

I. A type in his person of our Lord.

Always useful, in preparing for Communion, to bring before our minds the Person of our Lord. *Heb.* iii. 1. Never forget it is Him we seek in that Sacrament. "Jesus only" must be our desire, or it will become to us a lifeless ordinance.

a. Melchizedek, in Scripture, mysteriously appears and disappears again. "Without father," etc. Causing many conjectures as to who he was.

Reminding us of Him of Whom it is

said, "Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." *Mic.* v. 2.

b. Melchizedek was the priest of the Most High GOD. "Abideth a priest continually," i.e., with a typical eternity.

(i) So a great type of our High Priest. *Ps.* cx. 4. *Heb.* v. 10; vi. 20. Setting JESUS before us as a Priest of a higher order than Aaron. Greater because:

They were many; He is the only High Priest.

They were but sinful men; He is Divine, —perfect Man.

They offered bullocks and goats; He offered Himself.

They offered on earth; He in heaven.

They offered year by year; He one Sacrifice for ever.

(ii) Makes us think of the greatness of our Eucharistic Feast.

Those typical sacrifices were very solemn. But this far greater, for it is a remembrance of the true Sacrifice, a mystical joining in the same.

c. Melchizedek was King of Salem, King of Righteousness by his name. By both these titles he typifies CHRIST.

(i) King of Righteousness. *Jer.* xxiii. 6; *Isa.* xxxii. 1. They who come to Him in Communion to gain righteousness shall be blessed. *S. Matt.* v. 6.

(ii) King of Peace. "The Prince of peace." "He is our peace."

The thirst after righteousness will draw us where we shall find peace. The two go together. *Ps.* lxxii. 3, 7 ; lxxxv. 10.

So let Melchizedek make you think of Him Who comes to meet us at His Altar ; Who stands there as High Priest ; Who desires to rule you as your King, that you may have righteousness and peace.

II. A type in bringing forth bread and wine.

a. This was not ordinary food. Solemnly brought forth as a religious act ; by a religious person ; in a religious way, with blessing of those who received it.

So we may consider it a sacred food, a religious banquet, probably part of a sacrifice. And being the fruits of the earth, it was an earnest and pledge to Abraham of the possession of Canaan.

b. This type fulfilled in the Holy Eucharist.

Our LORD brings forth bread and wine ; but by His word of power it becomes His Body and Blood. It is a feast on His Sacrifice, the Bread corn bruised, like His Body ; the Grapes crushed in the winepress of the wrath of GOD.

This He brings forth for our spiritual refreshment ; this He gives as a pledge of our heavenly inheritance. For "the LORD Himself is the portion of mine inheritance" ; and in this Sacrament He gives Himself to us sacramentally. *S. John* vi. 54.

III. Abraham was returning from battle when Melchizedek fed him and his men.

a. So it is after battle that CHRIST would feed us.

We must come to the Altar from fighting against our spiritual enemies, like good soldiers; "against principalities," etc. Communion is not only for those who have few struggles. It is for the tempted, the fallen. We come to it after victory; but also after defeat. No doubt some of Abraham's followers were wounded. So our victory is seldom complete; there are wounds to show.

b. This reminds us that we should never come without penitence. Let this be careful and heartfelt.

But never be discouraged because your soul is not at ease. Are you really sorry? Are you going to fight again? For there must be no friendship nor communion with Sodom afterwards. *Gen.* xiv. 21 ff.

IV. Abraham gave Melchizedek tithes of all.

Showing the comparative greatness of the two. *Heb.* vii. 8, etc. Communion is a time for giving as well as receiving. We give of our substance; see how ancient the principle of giving one-tenth is. We must give GOD, too, worship, glory, and thanks. As He gives Himself to us, so we must give ourselves to Him.

V. Melchizedek blessed Abraham.

And in blessing him disappears from our sight. Like our LORD at the Ascension.

So each Eucharist ends with the Blessing, given by the priest, who represents the great High Priest. "The peace of GOD . . . keep your hearts" in righteousness. This is to be the result of coming to our Melchizedek.

So with this blessing in our ears, we may go forth to try to live as Abraham did.

Walking before GOD, and becoming perfect; with GOD our shield and our exceeding great reward.

XLIII *

Types

The Manna, a type of the Holy Communion

Round us the corn is falling, being gathered in. Should speak to us of higher things.

The corn will be *food* for thousands. But God has said, "Man shall not live by bread alone": and carries us back to the Manna; *Deut.* viii. 3.

The men are hard at *work*. But Jesus said, "Labour not," etc. *S. John* vi. 27.

And then, from the Manna,—which they brought up against Him,—led them on to think of the Bread of Life; of eating His Flesh, etc.

So harvest thoughts may carry our minds back to the Manna,—up to the Sacrament of the Altar.

I. The mystery of the Manna.

a. The account of it. *Exod.* xvi. 14 ff.

Came unseen, in the night. They said, "What is it?" which gave it its name. Called, "The bread of the mighty"; *Ps.* lxxviii. 24 ff. "Angels' food;" 2 *Esdras* i. 19; *Wisdom* xvi. 26.

* For August.

b. So of the Holy Communion. "The holy Mysteries."

(i) What is it? men say. Suppose a heathen came in!

Unbelievers say, only a little bread and wine; the sign of an absent thing; "not discerning the LORD'S Body."

Church says, It is JESUS CHRIST Himself. *How* we cannot tell. "Faith alone though sight forsaketh," etc.

There is the mystery. Thankfully we should accept it; believing in the real spiritual Presence of JESUS; trying to realize it more and more.

(ii) Mysteriously it comes to us. Into the darkness of the world came GOD Incarnate. Into the darkness of the world He comes in the Holy Eucharist. Silently the HOLY GHOST accomplishes the wonder. A few words spoken by the priest, and then——

Let the Manna, then, remind us of the awful mystery in that with which we are so familiar.

Pray for illumination of faith, to discern the greatness of this heavenly Food.

II. The Manna was sufficient for the day's need of each man. *Exod.* xvi. 17 ff.

The food in the Holy Eucharist is adapted to the needs of all.

a. At every Eucharist it is JESUS, GOD and Man. Wherever rightly celebrated, under

whatever circumstances ; in gorgeous cathedral, or humble cottage. Same offering made. Same LORD received. Think of it in the Catacombs of Rome. Even where irreverently celebrated.

b. So it is the same whoever receives it, if only he have *the right dispositions* ; saint or struggling sinner ; rich or poor ; old or young ; the dying saint, or criminal on eve of execution. To each, it is JESUS Whom they receive ; and He adapts His grace to the requirements of each.

c. So he that gathers much has nothing over ; for he needs all grace to make him a saint. He who gathers little has no lack, for he receives all the grace he *can* receive at that moment of his life.

So must open our mouth wide that He may fill it.

But measure what we receive, not by varying standard of our *feelings*, but by the greatness of His loving bounty. If we have duly prepared,—come in faith,—we shall have no lack.

So ask, what you feel you specially need ; or leave it to Him.

III. The Manna was different to different persons.

a. Said to have suited every man's taste ; *Wisdom* xvi. 20 ff. Yet we read, *Num.* xxi. 5 ; xi. 4-6.

b. So Holy Communion is to each according to what he is.

To the spiritually-minded, all that is wanted, all that is pleasant: can say of it, "Above all things the sum of delight." All their life of devotion and effort circles round it. Cannot *always* feel this; spiritual sickness may take away the appetite.

To the carnally-minded it is not the thing they want. Desire something more strong-tasted,—more exciting.

So, according to what we are, will be our valuing of this means of grace: *tested* by our perseverance, and care, in using it.

IV. The Manna had to be gathered according to God's command, etc. *Exod.* xvi. 19.

Early in the morning; not to be kept, etc. When these commands were disregarded, it was not to be had, or had gone bad.

So Holy Communion must be used according to God's ordinances, and the rules of the Church, or may be harmful. "Which being so Divine and comfortable a thing," etc. *First Exhortation.* "For as the benefit is great," etc. *Third Exhortation.*

a. Must be careful in our preparation. "Let a man examine himself," etc.

b. Early in the morning; of life; of the day.

c. To be gathered with regularity; not now and then, as we choose; but as regular, necessary food.

d. The sin about the Manna is called "tempting CHRIST." 1 *Cor.* x. 9. How much more the sin of them who despise this Bread, by neglect, or by misuse. 1 *Cor.* x. 3-5; xi. 30.

V. The Manna was for those journeying and fighting.

Began after they had crossed the Red Sea: ended when they had crossed Jordan.

So Holy Communion is for the baptized, who are on the way of salvation, but in the midst of difficulties and temptations. "The bread of the mighty"; for strength when most we need it. For every spiritual need in this world; for the Viaticum, when Jordan must be crossed.

So these things to *think* over; to *pray* for.

1. The mystery. Pray for faith.
2. The adaptability. Seek it for all needs.
3. The danger of despising. Pray for hunger and thirst after righteousness.
4. The rules about it. Submit to GOD, and His Church.
5. That it is for those in need. Be thankful.

Used rightly it will be our strength in our journey, our comfort in the hour of death, the beginning of life eternal.

XLIV

Types

The Manna and the Grapes

In the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau, each scene in our Lord's Passion is preceded by one or more tableaux, living pictures, taken from the Old Testament, and in most cases types of what follows, e.g., the bargain of Judas with the Jews is preceded by the tableau of Joseph sold by his brethren.

I. The scene of the Last Supper.

Each point is acted; the washing of the feet; the institution of the Sacrament; the warning to Judas.

a. Preceded by two tableaux.

(i) The Manna in the wilderness. *Exod.* xvi. 14-21. There is on the stage the great crowd of Israelites, men, women, and children; and the Manna represented as falling from above.

(ii) The cluster of grapes brought by the spies from Canaan. *Num.* xiii. 23.

Again, a great crowd all looking with astonishment at the grapes.

b. These two pictures are presented as types of the Bread and Wine, which are the outward part of the great Feast of the New Covenant; so types of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, which are the reality in the Sacrament. So during the tableaux the choir sings—

> "Good is the LORD! Good is the LORD!
> The hungry ones He satisfies
> With a new Food, in wondrous wise.
> Good is the LORD! Good is the LORD!
> In the New Covenant He gives
> His Flesh and Blood," etc.

These are the thoughts put into the minds of those who watch that solemn and moving scene.

II. Take our thoughts about the Holy Eucharist from these types.

a. The Manna.

(i) Bread manifestly sent from GOD.

That which grows through men's labour they are apt to think their own handiwork; what grows naturally they forget is GOD's gift. So GOD let His people feel their need; then He sent them that mysterious food, the Manna. They found it on the ground, as though fallen from heaven. That they might learn that man doth not live by bread alone. *Deut.* viii. 3.

So GOD would have us learn that our souls cannot live without His grace; that they need spiritual, even as our bodies natural, food. So He gives us a sacramental means of grace, partaken of outwardly by eating.

He teaches us that this food is JESUS CHRIST Himself, the true Bread from heaven, of which the Manna is a type.

Men like to think they are self-sufficient; JESUS has given us this spiritual Food, that we may remember that it is needful for us to receive something from GOD that we may truly live.

(ii) Bread that strengtheneth man's heart.

This food gave Israel strength for their long journeys, for their battles. So we receive the Body of CHRIST for strength, growth, life.

Those people died; He that eateth of this shall live. *S. John* vi. 49 ff. They who rightly partake, persevere, have eternal life.

b. The Cluster of grapes,

Reminds us spiritually of Him Who is the True Vine. The wine made from the grapes speaks of the Precious Blood.

(i) These grapes were an earnest of the goodness of the Promised Land. If such were the fruit, what must the land be!

So the Blood of the SON of GOD, shed for us on the Cross, given to us in the Blessed Sacrament, is a pledge to us that we may

inherit heaven. If that was shed to win it for us, it must be worth the winning! He Who "gives His sacred Blood for wine," will give us what He has bought for us at that price.

Remember some rejected this evidence of the spies. *Num.* xiii. 32. See S. John vi. 64.

(ii) The wine made from the grapes gives these thoughts.

Wine that maketh glad the heart of man. The heart of man cannot be rightly glad unless it is cleansed from guilt of sin. The Precious Blood alone can do this. With the deepest thankfulness for this cleansing we should receive the Cup. Wine also cleanses wounds. *S. Luke* x. 34. So to the Cup in the Eucharist we look specially for cleansing of the soul; "our souls washed in His most precious Blood." It is not merely the repetition of the other element; it is this which specially meets our needs as sinners.

And while we receive the Body for strength for the future, we may receive the Blood for cleansing from the past, for the healing of the wounds we have received.

Praise be to Him Who bringeth food out of the earth, etc. *Ps.* civ. 15.

XLV

Types

The Shewbread

Lev. xxiv. 5-9 ; *S. Mark* ii. 25 ff.

Our Lord, when the Pharisees blamed His disciples with regard to the Sabbath, alluded to David's eating it. See 1 *Sam.* xxi. 1-6. To show that exceptional need justifies exceptional use.

This Shewbread was ordained in the Tabernacle service.

The name literally is "Face," or "Presence bread." *Exod.* xxv. 30, R.V. margin. Called also "Continual bread." *Num.* iv. 7 ; 2 *Chron.* ii. 4. And "Holy bread." 1 *Sam.* xxi. 4.

Though an important part of the Tabernacle service, we are nowhere told the spiritual meaning. But from what we know of it, and from its names, we find in it a type of the Christian Sacrificial Feast.

I. The Presence bread.

a. The Presence must be the Presence of God ; for the people never saw the bread. That bread of God's Face ; through the participation of which man attains to sight of

God. So the bread was to be thought of as spiritual food, which brings men to that true life, which is to see God.

There is a connection between seeing God and being nourished by Him. *Exod.* xxiv. 11; *S. Luke* xiv. 15; xxii. 30. Christ, Who is the Image of God, is the Bread of Life.

b. If that was the meaning of the Presence Bread, it is a clear type of the Holy Communion.

(i) It brings us into the Presence of God.

A special Presence, designed to help our weakness and want of faith; with outward part as sign and pledge of the inward part.

A spiritual Presence, as the Presence of the Risen Lord must be, only to be discerned by spiritual sense.

A real Presence, not depending merely on the spiritual condition of the partakers, but on the word and power of Christ.

(ii) It gives us union with God. *S. John* vi. 56 ff. Jesus by this makes us like Himself, and gives us true life.

(iii) Remember that, having made our Communion, we do not leave this Presence behind when we leave the church. Through the day, the week, try to be recollected. Act gently, and speak little, for fear of venial sins.

II. The continual bread.

a. This brings it before us as an offering. It was always there before God. The twelve

loaves typified the twelve tribes ; the whole Church. There was with this an oblation of wine ; also incense placed on the top of each pile, part of which was burnt ; the type of prayer.

b. This reminds us of several things in the Eucharist.

(i) The offering is not only of our LORD Himself, but also of us, His Church. He presents His people in Himself. And so, too, our Communion is an offering of self to CHRIST. "We dwell in Him."

(ii) This offering is only acceptable through the shedding of CHRIST's Blood, i.e., the offering of His life on the Cross.

(iii) Along with this must go the incense of prayer. *Ps.* cxli. 2. Prayers for self and others.

III. The holy bread.

a. It was not common, for had been set before GOD in His sanctuary, as the bread is placed on the Altar at the Offertory. So it must only be eaten by holy people. So the Shew-bread was consumed by the priests only, who by office were bound to be holy ; and was to be eaten in a holy place. The exception in case of David proves the rule ; even then the High Priest required that the young men should be free from defilement.

b. At first sight here is a difference between this and Holy Communion. But not when

we remember 1 *Pet.* ii. 5 ; *Rev.* i. 6. All Christians have a priesthood, being members of the great High Priest. You rightly expect your priests to be holy ; but you may partake of the same Bread as they eat. "Holy things to holy persons" ; be as communicants what you like your priests to be. All, priests and people alike, must come with clean hands and pure hearts ; hands that have left off sin ; hearts that are purged from guilt. The Bread of the Presence of God needs a pure and lowly heart. *Hymn* 261.

Remember, then :

The Presence. Pray that it may abide with you.

The Continual Offering before God. Pray that you may be not unworthy to offer yourself to God.

The Holy Bread. Pray that you may be made and kept holy by this Divine Food.

XLVI

Types

The Burnt Offering

Our highest act of worship is the Holy Eucharist. Would any stranger staying among us find that out without asking?

At any rate we know that it is so; that the ritual of the Altar is a thing by itself; that all possible glory and beauty should be there.

This is so because it is our Christian Sacrifice.

Think of this aspect of the Sacrament. Very important; for "where the sacrificial aspect of the Holy Eucharist is ignored, there the idea of worship soon languishes."

I. The idea of Sacrifice.

"It is an act done with the intention of worshipping God, of offering something to Him, and of joining us to Him in a holy bond of union."

a. All nations have had sacrifice as their highest act of worship.

Without sacrifice nothing undertaken, nothing done. No distinction in this between peoples otherwise entirely different.

The more valuable the offering, the higher the act. And so came human sacrifices. See *Ps.* cvi. 35-37 ; 2 *Kings* iii. 26 ff ; *Micah* vi. 6 ff. Druidical sacrifices in our own land.

These naturally seemed the most efficacious.

b. The same we find from the beginning among worshippers of the true GOD. *Gen.* iv. 3-6 ; viii. 20 ; xii. 7, etc. ; *Job* i. 5.

Under the Mosaic law, sacrifice still has chief place, but the offering of it reserved for a distinct class, the priests.

The offerings numerous, and various in kind. Burnt—sin—thank—peace-offerings. Bullocks, lambs, etc., etc.

From the beginning, sacrifice was in one way or other the very soul and centre of worship offered to GOD, day by day. A rite adapted to all the times, circumstances, feelings, of a man's life.

c. So, too, in the Catholic Church.

We Christians have our Sacrifice ; the Jews had many ; we have but one, the only true one. For the Holy Eucharist is the memorial before GOD of the only Sacrifice which is really worthy of GOD's acceptance. It is to us all that the various sacrifices were to the Jews. Each of theirs sets forth one aspect of ours. The Holy Eucharist, offered in remembrance of CHRIST's Sacrifice, has caused all others to cease.

So we are not without Sacrifice, Altar, Priest.

II. The daily Sacrifice of the Jews a type of the Holy Eucharist.

a. This was the most constant and regular of all. See *Exod.* xxix. 38-42.

b. A type of the great Sacrifice of the Lamb of God on the Cross. But also a foreshadowing of the Holy Eucharist.

The first Eucharist in the upper room, and the Sacrifice on the Cross should be looked on as one act. The Lamb of God took the bread, etc. He said, "This is My Body, which *is* given"; "My Blood which *is* shed." There was the Lamb, the fine flour, and the wine, as in the Daily Sacrifice.

On the Cross, at the time of the Evening Sacrifice, died the Lamb of God; His Death had given power to the old sacrifices, and now superseded them. The Daily Sacrifice had only had power with God as pleading this one true Offering; which even then had been offered in will and intention. *Rev.* xiii. 8.

III. The Holy Eucharist answers then, in one aspect of it, to a Burnt Offering.

a. In such the creature was wholly given to God.

So the atoning character of a sacrifice is in the background; all centres in the entire consumption on the Altar.

So it was peculiarly the offering of worship. Not for the sake of relief from guilt; but simply as an act of homage.

This was a symbol of the offerer's entire dedication of himself to GOD. So the offerer was set forth as a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD." Cf. *Lev.* i. 8 ff.

The Daily Sacrifice was an offering of this kind.

b. So it reminds us how the Holy Eucharist is a great act of worship, apart from the seeking remission of our sins, etc. There we present before GOD the best Offering possible; Him Who is the Representative of our race. So acknowledging and adoring GOD as over all.

And with Him we offer ourselves wholly, like the burnt offering. Our souls and bodies, our intellect, our inward thoughts and desires, our actions and daily life.

So our Eucharist is an acceptable act of worship, when we come to offer CHRIST to the FATHER; and with Him ourselves, first purified from the guilt of sin.

Practical lessons:

1. Frequent Eucharists.

"The perpetual burnt-offering, which was above all others an offering of worship, has a reference to the great central act of Christian worship . . . and points unmistakably to a daily Eucharist as the ideal of Christian worship, most in accordance with the revealed mind of

God." The duty of communicants to make this possible.

2. To strive daily to yield oneself to God, that one's life may be a perpetual act of worship, a daily burnt-offering to the glory and praise of God; accepted, not for any worth it has in itself, but for the sake of the perfect offering of the life of Jesus, God made Man.

XLVII

Types

The Sin Offering

The Burnt Offering, of which the Daily Sacrifice was an instance, sets before us one aspect of the Holy Eucharist; viz., as an act of worship. The Sin Offering will give us another side of the truth.

I. The Sin Offering. *Lev.* iv.; xvi. 11-16, 27.

Consider this, of which the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement were the most solemn instance, as setting forth Christ's Death. All the ritual points to the One great Offering for sin, which God accepts on our behalf.

a. The chief characteristic of the sin offering was the law concerning the blood.

(i) See what is ordered. *Lev.* iv. 5-7; xvi. 14 ff. "The blood is the life"; so this represents the life given to God. The life of the offerer was forfeit by sin; this he acknowledged by giving another life, which God accepted in his stead.

(ii) This always pointed on to Him Who gave His life for us all, the only life that could really atone for our sinful lives. He came to give His life a ransom. Not to appease an angry GOD, but to effect the compassionate purpose of a loving GOD.

It is the sublime self-sacrifice of GOD made Man, offering Himself freely ; to save others from sins in which He has no share, from a death which He has not deserved.

When He died on the Cross, the Blood was poured out at the foot of the Altar. When He ascended, He went into the Holy of Holies, and the Blood was sprinkled on the Mercy-seat.

b. A sin offering consisted of one animal only ; and the precise offering was always specified. *Lev.* iv. 3, 14, 23, 28, 32. Men were not allowed to choose, or multiply, their sin offerings ; as if valuable, or many, sacrifices could atone for great, or many sins. (There was no offering for *wilful* sin.) The expiation was an act of GOD's mercy, not depending on the greatness of the offering.

Surely this sets before us plainly the One True Sacrifice, than which can be no other.

c. The sin was supposed to be laid on the victim.

(i) The offerer laid his hand on the victim. iv. 4, 15, 24, etc. With this went confession of the sin ; mentioned in certain cases, v. 5 ; xvi. 21. According to tradition, made in all

cases. "I beseech Thee, O LORD; I have sinned, trespassed, rebelled, and done thus and thus; but now I repent, and let *this* be my expiation."

(ii) All our sins were laid on JESUS in the Passion. *Isa.* liii. 6; 2 *Cor.* v. 21. And in confession we, as it were, lay our sins on the Head of the Divine Victim.

d. What was done with the sin offering is meant to teach us a horror of sin.

(i) Not burned on the Altar, as the burnt offering was. *Lev.* iv. 12, 21. Taken outside the camp, and there burned.

(ii) This is applied to CHRIST. *Heb.* xiii. 12. He, for our sins, was cast out as one unfit for Jerusalem, unworthy a place in the city of GOD.

What this cost Him we cannot understand until we come to know His holiness, and the full sinfulness of sin. His own words on the Cross, "My GOD," etc., help us to lift the veil. As the burnt offering was a figure of the Holy Eucharist as an act of worship, so

II. The Holy Eucharist is the great Sin Offering of the Church; the great pleading of the Death of Christ for the remission of sins.

a. It shows forth the offering of the life of JESUS.

Here on earth is done in a mystery what

the Great High Priest is doing in heaven. It is His Body broken, His Blood shed, once for all, which we have in the Eucharist.

So the priest at the Altar, representing the Great High Priest, pleads with GOD for the remission of our sins.

(N.B.—Article XXXI seems to be directed against the mediæval error, that the Sacrifice of the Cross was for original sin, that of the Mass for actual sins.)

b. So one reason for coming to the Holy Eucharist should be to join in pleading for the sins of the whole world, and for our own. To entreat GOD to set between our sins and their deserved punishment this great Sacrifice. As in S. Anselm's *Admonition to the Dying*. (See Bright's *Faith and Life*, p. 140.)

So we must try to come with more perfect penitence.

(i) A deeper sense of sin, and horror of it; coming from a greater knowledge and love of GOD. As we grow in grace we learn to sorrow, not only over what we have *done*, but over what we *are*. The constant sense of indwelling evil, that when we would do good evil is present with us, is what we need.

(ii) A better confession. It should be a true laying our hands on JESUS, and confessing our sins over Him, our Offering, that He may take them away.

(iii) The offering of the life, which the burnt offering puts before us.

Come, then, to Holy Communion sometimes, especially in Lent, with the thought of striving to make more perfect your repentance. Thanking God that He hath made Him Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

XLVIII

Types

The Peace Offering

The Burnt Offering foreshadowed the Eucharist as a simple act of worship.

The Sin Offering foreshadowed the Offering on the Cross, in heaven, in the Eucharist; an act of Atonement for the sins of the whole world.

I. The Peace Offerings.

The distinguishing mark in these was the sacrificial meal, the feast on the sacrifice. In some of the sin offerings part was eaten by the priests. But in the peace offerings the offerer also partook of the sacrifice; there was a meal.

The peace offering, then, foreshadows the Holy Communion as a feast on a sacrifice; a feast in which our souls are strengthened and refreshed.

Indeed the peace offering is specially adapted to represent the Holy Eucharist; for it summed up in itself the three classes of sacrifices. Akin to burnt offering, for part was consumed by fire; *Lev.* iii. 5, to sin offering, for the blood was sprinkled; iii. 2. But the feast is the special point about this.

So in the Holy Eucharist we feed on that which is offered to GOD. "Take, eat!" "Drink ye all." "The bread which I will give is My Flesh." "The Bread which we break," etc. "Take and eat this in remembrance that CHRIST died for thee, and feed on Him," etc.

II. The Sacrificial Meal.

a. The meaning of the meal.

To an Oriental two ideas associated with the common meal.

Friendship and fellowship between the partakers themselves, and between them and the provider of the feast.

Joy and gladness; so that even the highest and purest joy is described under this figure. *Ps.* xxiii. 5; *S. Matt.* viii. 11; xxii. 4; *S Luke* xiv. 15, etc.

(i) In this meal on the peace offering all ate of what belonged to GOD, to Whom it had been offered; so all who took part ate with GOD at His table. The Altar was GOD'S table; the sacrifices, GOD'S food; so those who partook were guests at GOD'S table, and partook of His food.

(ii) The same at our Altar. *Heb.* xiii. 10.

This also is GOD'S table; He feeds us on what we offer Him; we are His guests. See how S. Paul uses this fact. 1 *Cor.* x. 16-21. Eating of a sacrifice involves fellowship with the one to whom the sacrifice is offered: *vv.* 18-20. Against the table of

devils, the heathen altar, he sets the table of the LORD, the Christian Altar; a choice must be made between the two.

So S. Paul plainly looked on the Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice on which the worshippers fed.

b. The partakers of the meal.

(i) The offerer and his family fed on it. 1 *Sam*. i. 4 ff.

So he who comes to join in the Holy Communion partakes of His Offering, and is satisfied. If he communicates worthily, he finds satisfaction for all his needs, not merely forgiveness.

(ii) GOD had His part, the parts which were considered the greatest delicacies, which were burned on the Altar. *Lev*. iii. 3-5. This was called the food, or bread, of GOD. *Lev*. 11, 16; xxi. 6. So the offerer feasted as it were with GOD.

So in the Holy Eucharist GOD and man have communion. GOD finds joy and satisfaction in this union with those who are accepted in the Beloved.

We come to share with GOD Himself the Bread from heaven; to be filled with the fullness of CHRIST.

(iii) The priest had his part. *Lev*. vii. 31-34. So the offerer feasted also with the priest.

He represents CHRIST in His official character. JESUS is the Priest in every Eucharist; in communicating with the celebrant we communicate with Him.

(iv) The priest's children had their part. *Lev.* vii. 31 ; *Num.* xviii. 11.

These represent the whole Church, whether on earth, or in Paradise.

In the Holy Communion we share, communicate, with the whole Body of CHRIST. How clearly this shows us the need of charity !

So we are taught that in our Communion Feast we communicate with GOD, with JESUS the Great High Priest, with the whole Church, thereby obtaining and realizing the Communion of Saints. So indeed it is to us the "Holy Communion."

III. Those who ate of the Peace Offerings must be clean.

a. Solemnly enjoined. *Lev.* vii. 20 ff. And specially noted as to the Passover, which was the greatest of the peace offerings. 2 *Chron.* xxx. 17-19 ; *S. John* xi. 55. The uncleanness might be certain diseases, or any ceremonial defilement.

b. If such things as these held them back, how much more must sin in us keep us back from Holy Communion ?

Therefore we must seek cleansing before we eat. For "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily," etc. Some sins, as did the leprosy, need that we should go and show ourselves to the priest. For every sin we need the cleansing of the Blood of CHRIST.

So the Peace Offering teaches us :

1. To come to Holy Communion seeking food and satisfaction for our souls. So seek healing, strength, comfort ; bring particular needs there.

2. To come seeking communion with God and man. So be careful about love.

3. To seek cleansing beforehand. So be earnest in self-examination and confession.

So shall it be to us a real peace offering ; and we shall find in Jesus the peace the world cannot give ; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts.

XLIX

Types

The Pure Offering

Malachi i. 7-14.

This passage contains a prophecy of the Holy Eucharist, and instruction to the worshippers.

I. A Prophecy of the great Offering of the Christian Church. *v.* 11.

a. The Prophet foretells,

(i) The ceasing of the old sacrifices, and the offering of a new one. "I have no pleasure," etc. ; *v.* 10.

The Jewish sacrifices were defective in themselves ; could never be for the whole Church, for were locally fixed at Jerusalem.

Malachi prophesies of a new worship, founded on a further revelation of God. This is expanded and explained by our Lord Himself. *S. John* iv. 21-24 ; *S. Matt.* viii. 11.

(ii) So the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of the one true Sacrifice, of which the old sacrifices were types.

So the Fathers take this text. Justin Martyr, *Dial. c. Tryph.*, pp. 215 ff, Oxf. Trans. S. Irenæus (after quoting *v.* 11): "Therefore the offering of the Church, which the LORD hath taught to be offered in the whole world, is accounted with GOD as a pure sacrifice, and accepted of Him."

b. See how it is described: "Incense . . . and a pure offering."

Incense, literally, in the greater part of the Church; figuring the prayers of the saints, with which it is offered.

A pure offering. This is the meal offering; *Lev.* ii. 14 ff; vi. 14-17. It accompanied the bloody sacrifice.

So day by day the prophecy is being fulfilled at the Christian Altars, by the great Offering, pure in the outward part, still more in the inward part.

c. Good to remember that we have taken the place of others.

This tells of GOD taking the matter out of the hands of the Jewish Church. He judged it; yet in doing so carried out His loving purposes.

He has revived in the English Church the belief in, and the practice of worship in the Holy Eucharist. If the Church of England be not faithful to her opportunity, it may pass to another branch of the Church. *Rom.* xi. 21.

So each one of us must try to be faithful to the teaching of the Church. Whether

we are constant in our attendance at the Eucharist, whether we are good communicants, is not merely a matter for ourselves; but one which affects the whole Church.

Pray for the restoration of the daily offering of the Sacrifice. Perfect and increase your Communions.

II. God's complaints against the people in the use of the Sacrifices.

Addressed first to the priests, the centre of offending; but through them to the people.

a. Ignorance of self and their sins.

(i) Very noticeable in this book how they affect innocence. See i. 6 *b*; ii. 14, 17; iii. 8, 13. Without knowledge of God's love there can be no real sense of sin. They take the defensive, like Cain. *S. Matt.* vii. 22 ff.; xxv. 44 ff.

(ii) A fatal state of mind in communicants.

To come in ignorance of our state is to come badly. And it is inexcusable. For self-examination is urged on us by Scripture, and by the Church. We can have the help of the Holy Spirit to enable us to do it. *S. John* xvi. 8.

So if we are accused by God of unfitness, it will not do to say, "Wherein was I unfit?"

b. Pollution of the holy things. vv. 7, 12.

(i) By their actions they said, "The table of the Lord is contemptible." Anything would

do. This was to pollute the holy things ; so to pollute GOD. A bold expression, like "dishonouring GOD."

"We pollute GOD when we conduct ourselves irreverently or viciously before Him."

(ii) We can offer polluted bread. Not that the bread is ever anything but pure and holy ; but by our own conduct we can dishonour it. By worshipping without attention, reverence, obedience. By receiving unworthily. Remember 1 *Cor.* xi. 27. "For when the Sacraments are violated, Himself, Whose Sacraments they are, is violated." So beware of an unprepared, self-confident approach.

c. Offering an imperfect offering.

(i) They offered blemished things in sacrifice ; i. 8, 13 ff.

Perfectness was an essential thing in the creature sacrificed. To offer a blemished creature was like putting a bad coin into the collection.

(ii) So we must consider whether in our great offering we give GOD of our best. There is an oblation of

The sacred elements ; "the best and purest . . . that can be gotten" :

Our money ; remember the widow's two mites :

Our prayers ; let them be from the heart, intelligent :

Ourselves ; think of this more particularly.

What is the preparation wherewith we come to offer ourselves?

Is it the best we can give to GOD? Or does our conscience ever tell us to do more?

What is our daily service of GOD? Is it an effort after complete self-surrender? LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?

d. Irreverence. ℣. 13.

Familiarity might bring contempt; or weariness. "Our only choice is between love and weariness."

So try to realize that our relation to the Holy Eucharist, the Pure Offering, matters not only to our own souls, but to the whole Church.

Individuals make up parishes; and parishes make up the Church. Think of GOD's complaints of His people, and examine yourselves by them.

Be careful about these! "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years."

L

Types

Ruth

The history of Ruth, like many in Scripture, may be taken as a kind of parable; as well as bringing before us a true and faithful woman. She is a figure of the faithful soul, in its relation to Christ. And as all our relation to our Lord is included in the Blessed Sacrament, this history reminds us of things that will help us as communicants.

Remember the chief points of the story :

Ruth holding faithfully to Naomi, and coming to Bethlehem in poverty. *Ruth* i. 15-19.

Her gleaning in the fields of Boaz. ii. 1-3.

Boaz, kindly dealing with her. ii. 8-14.

Her happy marriage with Boaz. iv. 10-15.

I. The Type.

a. Boaz, through whom Ruth got blessing, is a type of Christ. His name means strength. And Jesus is stronger than the strong; mighty to save.

The rich man : ii. 1. So in Christ are all the rich gifts we need. *Col.* ii. 3.

He becomes the Bridegroom. *S. John* iii. 29.

He of Whom Boaz is the type is the One we have to do with in Communion. Let every Communion be a personal dealing with CHRIST. It is not doing *something*, or seeking *something*; but going to a Person that He may deal with the soul. Some speak of Sacraments coming between the soul and CHRIST. As well say a window comes between us and the light!

b. Ruth, a type of the soul which is brought to CHRIST, and is faithful to Him. Who willingly leaves her own country, the world; is ready to forget all, and attach herself to CHRIST. *Ps.* xlv. 11. This is the spirit of the true communicant towards our LORD; this is real poverty of spirit. The communicant must have a real desire to part with all sin, a real willingness to follow CHRIST.

c. The field of Boaz at Bethlehem is a type of the Church of CHRIST.

"Go not to glean in another field." For in the Church only can be found the true Sacrament of the Altar. A great argument against schism; in parting from the Church, men part themselves from the sacramental Bread of Life. ii. 22.

II. Ruth and Boaz.

a. Ruth and Naomi were in want in the land of Moab. When they heard "that the

LORD had visited His people in giving them bread," they came to Bethlehem, the house of bread, and were made rich. While the soul clings to the world, it is poor, for nothing can really satisfy. When it realizes that GOD hath visited His people, by the Incarnation, *S. Luke* i. 68—in giving them Bread, through the Blessed Sacrament—then the way is open to the true riches.

But a journey must be taken to get back to Bethlehem. To many, that is like the return journey of the Prodigal.

b. Ruth at her gleaning.

Boaz comes out to see and bless his reapers. He finds Ruth ; see what he bids her do.

(i) "When thou art athirst," etc. ℣. 9.

For the faithful soul there can be spiritual communion with CHRIST at any time ; morning or evening ; in sorrow, want, or danger ; we may go to the vessels of His grace and drink.

(ii) "At meal time, . . . come hither," etc., ℣. 14.

At meal time ; when the Blessed Sacrament is celebrated ; when GOD says to us, "All things are ready."

The parched corn. In the Sacrament it is the corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died ; parched in the fire of the Passion.

The vinegar, or sour refreshing wine. Its counterpart, the Blood of JESUS, refreshing the weary soul in the hot struggle.

This is the corn that makes the young men cheerful, the new wine, the maids. *Zech.* ix. 17.

"She did eat and was sufficed." For this is the food that can satisfy the soul, for it is JESUS Himself.

Well may we speak to JESUS as Ruth did to Boaz : *v.* 10.

III. Results of Ruth's gleaning.

What benefits do we get from the Blessed Sacrament ?

a. Abundant subsistence for herself.

So, receiving rightly, we shall get grace sufficient for every need. Have special intentions to ask from Him.

b. Support for Naomi too.

If we cannot exactly do this, since each must receive the Sacrament for himself, we can help others to the same benefits ; by intercession in union with the Sacrifice ; by example and word attracting others to it.

c. Union in marriage with Boaz.

So Holy Communion is the union of the soul with CHRIST.

The means of union here ; the pledge of eternal union hereafter.

As Ruth's name is ever in the genealogy of CHRIST ; *S. Matt.* i. 5, so the name of the faithful communicant shall ever be in the book of life.

Learn, then, from this beautiful story :

Readiness to give up the things of sight for the things of faith ; our own way for the way of JESUS ; that we may win and use this great gift. Faithfulness in using it. Faithful in our preparation, in our daily life.

Perseverance, seeking it regularly, continuously.

So shall we belong to CHRIST, here and for ever.

LI

Miscellaneous

The Woman who touched Christ's Garment

S. Mark v. 25-34.

If our Lord's gift to us of the Blessed Sacrament is to do for us what He means it to do, we must take care that we approach it in the right spirit. Many a one in the Gospels teaches us how to come to the Great Physician of our souls.

Take the case of her who came to Him in sore need, and went away, having heard Him say, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." We should like to leave His Altar with the same assurance; in the same spirit as she came must we come. Our coming to Him has to be a double one. First, in penitence, for forgiveness; then for union with Him through the Sacrament. She teaches us about both. Think what we need.

I. Knowledge of our State. *S. Mark* ii. 17.

a. She knew her plague and pain; her legal uncleanness, too. Had tried many doctors, many remedies; but rather worse. So by her sense of need she was led to Christ.

b. The first thing to bring us to our LORD, both for healing and for strength, is to know the plague of our own hearts.

(i) We do not go to JESUS in penitence, till we feel that we are sick in soul; we are not drawn to the Altar till we feel our weakness in fighting sin, in doing our duty.

But certainly we are weak; perhaps we are not forgiven, and that is a deadly sickness. Have fallen among thieves, who have left us half dead. Perhaps the power of bad habit is upon us, and we feel helpless. And sometimes it is like this and we know it not.

(ii) We need, then, self-examination.

By the light and help of the HOLY SPIRIT. By the aid of GOD's commandments. By the things that others say of us, which are not so bad as what Satan can accuse us of. Remember, it is neither natural, nor easy, nor pleasant to know one's self.

(iii) The sense of sin, of many infirmities, of much weakness, will surely draw us to our LORD; for there is no other. He is the One Who forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities. We may well say, in preparation for Communion, "As one sick, I come to the Physician of life." "Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed."

II. Faith and Hope.

a. She came in faith, "having heard the things concerning JESUS." In hope, that if she

could touch Him all would be well with her. And hers was the touch that was felt, and blessed, amid all the pushing and crowding.

b. We must come in faith and hope :

(i) For forgiveness of our sins ; believing in the power and efficacy of His Sacrifice on the Cross ; hoping in His mercy.

(ii) For Communion ; believing in the Mystery, in our LORD's own words, and in the teaching of the Church about it. If it were nothing more than bread and wine, how could it heal and help and bless us ? "Draw near with faith, and take," etc. And hoping for help, through the Blessed Sacrament, for our own special disease, our own weakness. No miracle of healing is too great to expect and ask from Him.

III. Humility.

a. She came timidly behind Him, touching just the fringe of His garment, hoping not to be noticed. Like Mary Magdalene at His feet, behind Him. *S. Luke* vii. 38.

b. So must we come to the Altar of GOD ; not trusting in our own righteousness ; not thinking we are good enough. "Just as I am, without one plea," etc.

And humility involves being right in our relation to others. For pride is the cause of most breaches of charity.

IV. Confession.

a. It is remarkable to see the way CHRIST treated her. Asking who touched Him, not in ignorance, but to elicit the confession; making her do a hard thing for her own good. *v.* 33. As GOD asked Adam, "Hast thou eaten?" Cain, "Where is Abel?"

b. Reminds us of the need of confession of sin. 1 *S. John* i. 9.

Confession in our own prayers all must practise. Let it be real, sorrowful, particular, as a sacramental confession. Sometimes we need confession before GOD's priest. We know the Church's rule about it. The fear of others must not keep us away; this woman's nervousness and dread of the crowd did not keep her back from JESUS.

May be said, "Her confession came *after* she was healed." Yes! reminding us that though confession to GOD is a necessary condition of forgiveness, it is not the confession that *wins* us the pardon. It is the merits of the Death of CHRIST. The best confessions may be those when pardon has already come, because the heart has gone out to GOD in contrition. So it came to the Prodigal Son.

She touched, and was instantly healed. May our spiritual touch of Him in the Blessed Sacrament be like hers!

Many thronged round JESUS, but got no blessing. So it may be even with communicants.

But if we prepare earnestly and humbly, come in hopeful trust and loving devotion, then we touch Him, and He heals us. First in Absolution, that our guilt may be cleansed away. Then in Communion, that all the diseases of our souls may be healed. He touches every part of our being, that all may be sanctified and meet for His use.

LII

Christ at the Pharisee's Feast

S. Luke xiv. 7-11.

Think of our Lord at the feast, watching the guests as they assembled, and noticing their eagerness for the best seats. And during the feast He gave them a lesson about it, in parabolic form.

Does He not watch us as we assemble at our Communion Feast?

I. "When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast." *v.* 8, R.V.

These words connect Christ's teaching with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. So with the preparation for and foreshadowing of it in this world, in our Communion Feast.

Heaven is compared to a marriage feast because of the union between Christ and His Church, the Bridegroom and the Bride, which will then be consummated.

This union is given to us as individuals in Baptism; renewed, strengthened in each good Communion.

So we may apply our LORD's words to our behaviour at Holy Communion.

II. What He bids us not do. *vv.* 8, 9.

a. At our Communion Feast this has no meaning as regards actual places. For there all are equal.

But may refer to our place in our own estimation. We may presume on what we think our merits, on our long service as communicants ; we may compare ourselves with others whom we see there. The result will be to give us a higher place in our own thoughts than is due to us.

b. GOD, Who has invited us, knows our true place. And He may send us down lower than some whom we have despised. In this world, by letting us fall into sin ; He resisteth the proud. In the other world, by giving us our true place in His kingdom.

III. What He bids us do. *v.* 10.

These words will show us in what spirit to come to Communion.

a. In penitence. "In the lowest place." Like S. Paul : 1 *Tim.* i. 15.

Take your place at the Altar as a humble penitent, in nought else is there safety, even if you have been a communicant all your life.

So consider what your penitence is like.

Your self-examination. Is it real, or perfunctory? Your contrition. Is it earnestly prayed for, or forgotten? Your confession. Is it hurried over? Ought it to be made before a priest, and is not? Your purpose of amendment. Does it include real honest effort? avoidance of occasions of sin?

b. In a deep sense of unworthiness.

Sit down in the lowest place in your own thoughts. Never mind about others, whether they are above you or below you. You may know many things against them; but not so many sins as you ought to know of in yourself. You know one thing at any rate, that you are not worthy of so great a privilege.

IV. The result and reward of true humility. *vv.* 10 *b*, 11.

The King that invited us says to the humble, "Friend, come up higher."

a. We all ought to be progressing; getting higher in our spiritual life, nearer to God. *Exod.* xiv. 15; 2 *Pet.* i. 5-7; iii. 18. We must not be content to be always on the same level. We ought to go forward, higher,

(i) In power over our sins, whatever they may be. But do not measure your progress by the power and frequency of your temptations; but by your resistance of them.

(ii) In regularity and earnestness of worship

and devotions. But this is not to be measured by ease and pleasure in them.

(iii) In our relations to other people; both negative and positive.

Are we hindrances to the *smoothness* of good life? Do we make GOD's cause our cause, to help it on by all means?

b. If we are conscious that there is no going up higher, is it because the King does not find us "in the lowest seat?" Does not find us in true penitence; in real humility? None but penitents can be in grace; and only those who are in grace can be called up higher.

Think, then, of, and pray for, two things: Humble penitence; real progress towards perfection.

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

LIII

The Wedding Garment

S. Matt. xxii. 1-14.

In the Exhortation giving notice of Communion we are bidden to prepare ourselves so that we "may come holy and clean to such a heavenly Feast, in the marriage-garment required by God in holy Scripture."

Seems to liken our Communion Feast to the marriage feast in the parable. This sets forth, in the first place, the blessings generally in the Kingdom of God, and the way they are received by men. At the Incarnation God made the marriage for His Son. When He had died, risen again, ascended, sent down the Holy Ghost, all things were ready. But some made light of it, etc. And the judgment followed. ℣. 7.

But it also teaches us specially about Holy Communion.

I. The Marriage Feast of the Holy Communion.

The greatest privilege of Christians on earth; the nearest likeness to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. *Rev.* xix. 9.

a. Think what it is to which GOD invites us ; a double privilege. To be guests at the Marriage Feast, where the Food is the Body and Blood of His dear SON.

In feasting to be united to His SON. Each soul is in a sense the Bride ; and there we renew our union with the heavenly Bridegroom. *S. John* vi. 56. Then we dwell in CHRIST and CHRIST in us, etc.

b. Think of Communion like this.

We are invited to the closest union with Him. We cannot do without this union, for we can only be accepted by GOD in union with our LORD. If we are in union with Him, death has no terrors. And *we* must seek this union through the Sacrament.

II. Those who are called to this Feast.

a. The invited guests who would not come. ℣℣. 5, 6.

CHRIST's servants are sent out to call us who are bidden. The notice of Communion, the bell on the Sunday morning, say to us, "Come, for all is ready !"

Not many of us would say, "I will not come." Rather, at times, "I cannot come, for I am not fit."

This is all right, if we are in earnest, and do not mean to rest until we are fit ; all are not ready to come on every Sunday. But beware of going on week after week like this, and saying, "I cannot come !" For in GOD's

sight that may be, "I will not." Any one can, with God's help, prepare his heart, and mend his life, so as to be able to come rightly. It is a matter of will, for God is ready to help.

A further stage is "to make light of it," when people have got not to care whether they go or not. They go their ways, and do not trouble themselves about it.

Only another step to abusing and running down those who do go. Beware lest carelessness about Communion lead us on to this!

b. The assembled guests.

See in them ourselves when we are gathered for Communion.

(i) The King comes in to see the guests.

As we kneel before the Altar, the King is there to scrutinize us. There is a judgment then which we cannot escape. A foretaste of that at the Last Day. 1 *Cor.* xi. 31 ff.

(ii) He saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment.

One; for not even one sinner can avoid notice.

So at Communion He may see a soul who has no right to be there. God has pointed out, through His Church, the way to obtain the garment; and all may have it. He who, in God's sight, has it not, will have no excuse; and must be punished. "For this cause many are weak and sickly," etc.

III. The Wedding Garment is symbolical of the righteousness required in us when we approach the Altar.

a. We are constantly reminded of this outwardly.

Always been a custom among men to make a difference in dress on special occasions, e.g., Sunday garments ; bridal attire ; Confirmation dress ; mourning, etc. Only an outward expression of inward feelings.

On the same principle there is a distinctive dress for the Celebrant, worn at no other time. At first, perhaps, simply the "best clothes" ; but remaining practically the same, while the fashion of ordinary clothes changed.

So let the sight of the priest's vestments make you think of the wedding-garment of the soul. "Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness" should be your prayer. And then think that this garment of righteousness is needed by all communicants.

b. What is the wedding-garment then ?

For communicants it is that preparedness which God requires. Not perfection, perfect holiness, but being in the right way ; though different persons are at different stages.

(i) Gained by true repentance. See *Exhortation*. If truly penitent we shall never be cast out as unfit.

(ii) Shown by a humble sense of unworthiness. "We do not presume," etc. The less we

feel worthy to come, when we have tried to prepare, the more likely are we to receive worthily.

It is not very much that GOD in His loving-kindness requires of us in coming to this Feast.

We must have the will to yield ourselves to Him. But it is *He* Who clothes us with the garment of His righteousness, and makes us fit to be there. If we will try to fulfil our part, we shall be able to say, *Isa.* lxi. 10.

And this Feast on earth shall be a preparation for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven.

LIV

The Mystery of Food

God has so created man that his life continually depends on the earth whereon he dwells. All our food comes from the ground; though man is God's highest creation on this earth, he cannot live without the help of lower forms of life. This is a mystery; no doubt designed by God for man's training. And there is a further mystery in the fact that God has made natural food the means of imparting the spiritual food. The highest, most mysterious means of grace we have, is a sacrament of food. The corn grown in the fields, the produce of the vineyards, were chosen for the outward part. So when we consider the purpose of the natural food, it helps us to understand about the spiritual.

I. The purpose of God in making natural food needful for us.

a. To teach man dependence on God, his Father.

God might have made us differently. But has made us dependent on these lower created things. Man has to labour to pro-

duce these. But his labour is not effective apart from GOD's will. May do all he can, but GOD may not give the increase ; he may have the food, but be unable to use it. This lesson is given to Israel. *Deut.* viii. 3. Quoted by CHRIST. *S. Matt.* iv. 4.

b. To teach man the advantage of fellowship.

The common feast is the foundation of social life. From the family outwards. *Gen.* xviii. 1-8 ; *S. Luke* xv. 23. All nations take this view. Eating salt, etc.

And so we have Club feasts, Harvest feasts, etc.

c. Food becomes the instrument of sacrifice.

The deep religion of the heart must express itself by an offering ; and this naturally takes the form of man's food.

In the Garden of Eden even. Cain and Abel. Noah, etc.

GOD has sanctioned this by all the regulation of the laws of sacrifice.

d. Food is made the means of associating men with GOD.

Food "from heaven," like the Manna ; or food shared by heavenly visitants ; as in the meal under the oak at Mamre ; and the partaking of sacrifices under the Levitical Law ; all brought man into fellowship with GOD. Cf. Exod. xxiv. 11.

Food, given by GOD to man, is in turn offered by man to GOD ; and then becomes afresh the gift of GOD in the supernatural

order ; that GOD and man may have fellowship together.

II. The purpose of God in feeding us spiritually by a Sacrament.

All these ideas meet in JESUS CHRIST, Who is the true Bread, the Food for our souls. From His miracle of feeding the five thousand with natural food, supernaturally given, He taught them about Himself as spiritual Food. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth," etc.

And this discourse was a preparation for the crowning act, when "He took bread," etc. By this too we are taught,

a. Dependence on GOD.

True life is something higher than the mere natural life. And must be sustained by a higher kind of food than natural. The body is fed with material food ; the mind by instruction ; the spirit by grace ; which comes to us from GOD, through JESUS CHRIST. The greatest means by which we receive this grace is the Holy Communion.

b. Sacrifice.

Man had felt that his devotion to GOD was best expressed by the surrender of the universal necessity of life, his food.

JESUS has shown to man the best sacrifice of all. "My Body which is given [or broken] for you."

Has taught him that through this he can have forgiveness of sin.

Has enabled him to make a remembrance of this Sacrifice, and partake of the benefits thereof.

Has shown him that he must be ready to give up himself and all to GOD.

c. Union.

Man desires fellowship, sympathy. Has found them partially in reception of food in common. May be found perfectly in the Holy Communion.

In this Sacrament man has true spiritual union with GOD; has true communion and fellowship with his fellow-members. So he must be reconciled to them in heart, in order to take part rightly in that Feast.

So labour not for the meat that perisheth; take more pains about the Food for the spirit, the meat that endureth.

Remember that, in order that it may be life-giving Food to us, we need

1. Forgiveness of sins, through the Sacrifice of CHRIST.
2. Surrender of our whole being to GOD.
3. Reconciliation and charity with all.

So may we be prepared for the Feast of good things hereafter, when the body shall no longer need food to keep it alive; when the spirit shall no longer need to receive it by means of Sacraments.

LV

The Benefits of Holy Communion

1 *Cor.* x. 1-5.

These words we may transfer to ourselves as communicants. We are all baptized; we all partake of the same Sacrament. But the result is not the same to all. Some get judgment; some much grace, some little. This must depend on ourselves; for the Sacrament is always the same; "Every man according to his eating."

We need to realize the greatness of Communion; that we may keep up our habit of Communion; yet never let it become a mere habit. Consider, then, the benefits.

I. The Sacraments are an extension of the Incarnation.

They do for the individual what the Incarnation did for the human race. He redeemed me, and all mankind. That was done long ago; but the benefit is meant for each soul that is brought into the world.

This commonly is given through sacramental means. A man does not become a member of

CHRIST at his birth, from the fact that CHRIST died for him; but by Baptism, the appointed means.

And so Holy Communion will do for him who receives it rightly what the Incarnation did for mankind.

a. The SON of GOD was Incarnate to make GOD known to men.

(i) GOD visited His people, and tabernacled among them, that they might learn to know GOD in a nature they could perceive and understand. "He who knows JESUS CHRIST knows GOD." *S. John* i. 18; xii. 45; xiv. 9. *Heb.* i. 1-3.

(ii) Holy Communion is the greatest means of knowing JESUS now.

Blood-relations know each other best. Husband and wife get an intimate knowledge of each other, if it is a union of hearts. So the partaking of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, the intimate union between Him and us, will give us this knowledge.

b. The SON of GOD was incarnate that He might make an Atonement for our sins. *S. John* i. 29.

(i) Mankind through sin was at variance with GOD, with his fellow-men. The coming of JESUS CHRIST, His Incarnation and Sacrifice on the Cross, were to bring peace. To reconcile GOD to man; to make all men brothers; to give man peace in his heart. To guide our feet into the way of peace.

(ii) Holy Communion is to do the same for individuals.

It gives us sinners communion with the All-Holy GOD, through our LORD; for we are made one with Him, and He with us.

It is a pledge of our reconciliation with GOD; "and dost assure us thereby of Thy favour and goodness towards us."

It gives us communion with each other. "We are all partakers of that one Bread." Not only with those who kneel with us at the same Altar; with all our brethren throughout the whole world; with the saints departed.

It will bring us peace within. By gradually subduing the flesh to the spirit, uniting flesh and spirit in one; so in time reconciling the two that lust against one another. *Gal.* v. 17.

c. The SON of GOD was incarnate that He might give us grace. *S. John* i. 16 ff.

(i) GOD incarnate is the source of all grace to the human race. He became partaker of our human nature that we might be "partakers of the Divine nature." In the Second Adam, the FATHER of the new race, is all grace.

(ii) The Holy Communion is the constant channel of grace to the soul of the individual. For every need; the overcoming of sin, the gaining of all virtues, etc. If we brought our needs there with greater hope and expectation of blessing, how much more

should we gain! Know what you want, and seek grace for it there.

II. Communicants can miss these benefits.

"With most of them GOD was not well pleased."

a. Two things about the Holy Eucharist no man can alter: the Real Presence; the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

So long as the Sacrament is celebrated according to the commands of the Church, it makes no difference to these whether the Liturgy and Ritual be Roman or Anglican, whether the priest and worshippers be of good or evil life.

b. We can prevent the Sacrament being a means of grace to ourselves; and can so hinder our LORD'S purpose:

(i) By neglecting it. And this sin will be as surely judged as will eating and drinking unworthily.

(ii) By coming in the wrong way. Without true penitence for our sins. Without honest purpose of amendment. Without charity towards others. Without seeking Absolution when conscience tells us we should do so.

So earnestly take pains, that as we are all fed with the same spiritual Meat, we may all have the full benefit thereof.

It is meant to be a means of increasing our knowledge of our LORD.

Beware lest it become an estrangement, a darkening!

It is meant to be a means of reconciliation.

Beware lest it part us still further from GOD!

It is meant to be a channel of GOD's grace.

Beware lest it become a source of harm to us!

The things that should have been for our wealth may become an occasion of falling!

LVI

The Communion of the Blood of Christ

1 *Cor.* x. 16 ; xi. 25 ff.

The Sacrament of the Holy Communion is a double Sacrament, though one and indivisible. There are two distinct parts, the Bread and the Cup.

In Holy Baptism Christ takes *one* earthly substance, and sanctifies it to the mystical washing away of sin.

In Holy Communion He takes *three*—bread, wine, and water—and lifts them up into a higher, mysterious, plane of being.

Bread He takes, as being the staff of man's food ; the figure of Him Who calls Himself the true Bread from heaven.

Wine and water, the staple of man's drink, a figure of the Blood and Water which poured from His wounded side.

These He coupled together in one Sacrament ; so that it cannot be duly celebrated without both kinds being consecrated, received.

But the second is not the mere repetition of the first in another form. It is not God's way of working to do, or give, anything superfluous.

Natural that the Food for the soul, like that for the body, should consist of both eating and drinking. Men die of thirst more quickly than of hunger.

Natural to think of the LORD's Body as chief in the Sacrament; He gave it the first place; in our thoughts it seems to include the other.

But there is a distinct significance in the Blood; both as regards the Sacrament itself, and as regards our reception; a distinct gift. Consider, then, the Cup of blessing which we bless.

I. The outward part.

Wine mingled with water, as used by JESUS at the Institution. "Wine that maketh glad the heart of man." We can see why JESUS chose this to be the means of imparting His precious Blood.

a. It is the fruit of the vine; that which represents the life and goodness of the vine, the purpose of its being, the ultimate result of all that has gone before. Called, "The blood of grapes." *Gen.* xlix. 11. And JESUS is the True Vine. *S. John* xv. 1 ff. We are the branches which receive life from Him.

b. The wine, which is got from the grapes by crushing them in the winepress, is the natural substance which, of all others, best typifies the Blood of Him Who is the True Vine. He was thrown into the great winepress of the wrath of GOD against sin.

Artists have represented CHRIST crucified on a winepress.

II. The Gift in the Cup.

The Blood of CHRIST poured out on behalf of many. "This cup is the new Covenant in My Blood."

a. These words connect it with the type in Old Testament. *Exod.* xxiv. 8; *Heb.* ix. 19 ff. The blood is the life; the seat of the life. *Lev.* xvii. 11. When drained from the body, the life goes with it. So the blood of the victim meant the surrendered life. GOD had pleasure, not in death, but in the humble surrender of the life, which was forfeit through sin.

b. This is what our LORD has done for us.

Once for all He shed His Blood on the Cross. Then He entered into the Holy of Holies; not, like the Jewish High Priest, carrying blood of others, but with His own Blood.

He shows before the FATHER, not His death only, nor His life only, but His life enhanced by having passed through death. *Rev.* i. 18; v. 6. This is the Blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel. This He gives us in the Eucharistic Cup.

c. So this specially meets our needs as sinners.

If men had not fallen we might have had the Bread, without the Cup ; as the Incarnation might have been, without the Atonement. The Body for union ; the Blood for the remission of sins. We might have expected a different order : remission first, and then union. But this follows the same order as the two petitions in the LORD'S Prayer : first bread, then forgiveness. So, too, in 1 *S. John* i. 7. First union, then perfect cleansing.

III. Practical significance of this to us.

a. The Roman refusal of the Cup to the laity. See Neale's *Sermons on the Blessed Sacrament*, pp. 111, 135 ff.

In early days one kind alone was often received. If impossible to receive both, we may hope that the full benefit is received. But we may well be thankful that we receive both, and should pray that this hindrance to union may be removed.

b. The view of extreme teetotallers, that only unfermented wine should be used. They risk the reality of the Sacrament, in view of possible danger to one here and there ; as to which they may well trust GOD.

c. In our own reception.

While we receive the Body with special prayer for strength, through union with CHRIST, may well receive the Blood with special thought of our sins, asking for cleansing from particular sins.

Let us, as we receive the Precious Blood,

Remember with thankfulness the very life of the SON of GOD, yielded up for us.

Remember our own life is forfeit through sin, and take thankfully of His.

So that hereafter it may be said of us:

They overcame by the Blood of the Lamb.

They washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

LVII

Thanksgiving after Communion

S. Matt. xxvi. 30.

The duty of thanksgiving after Communion is as important as preparation beforehand, but it is even more neglected. It is the cause of much of what seems the failure of Communion to help us.

I. Remember the first Eucharist.

It ended with Psalms of thanksgiving.

a. These were always sung at the Passover Feast. During the meal, *Ps.* cxiii., cxiv.; at the end, *Ps.* cxv. to cxviii.

So the Passover thanksgiving became that night a thanksgiving for Communion. Judas had gone out; their hearts were glad with a gift only half understood. Then rose up this Psalm of praise.

b. They and our Lord were going out to Gethsemane. He to His awful Passion; they to the terror, shame, despair, it brought them. Between their Communion and the conflict came the song.

An example to us. We go out from Communion to fight, to suffer ; between should come praise and thanksgiving.

II. The need of Thanksgiving after Communion.

It is a plain duty for all GOD's gifts : but also,

a. We lose much by our lack of thankfulness. GOD is always desiring to give us more grace. We miss it from lack of humble asking ; perhaps still oftener for lack of thankfulness. GOD, for His own glory and for our good, has made thanksgiving for one mercy a condition of further mercies from Him. We treat children thus for the sake of their training. See S. Luke xvii. 15-19. This shows our LORD's desire for gratitude, and that He can further bless him who shows it. Yet even earnest people neglect thanksgiving. GOD is waiting to bless ; we are not ready.

b. This specially true of the greatest of all gifts, Holy Communion.

(i) Think what it means to have received Communion. It has been said, "One Communion well received is enough to make a man a saint." Either this is an exaggeration or there must be something faulty about our Communions.

Is it not greatly from want of due thanksgiving ? We have the temper of beggars ; all entreaty before, poor thanks after. This

is partly from want of faith in the reality of the gift ; partly human nature.

(ii) Remember what we want after Communion.

We have the grace, but we want to preserve it ; and we look forward to another Communion with fresh grace, each one lifting us a step higher. But this is not the experience of most of us. And want of thankfulness is partly the cause.

III. The way to give thanks.

a. Thanksgiving provided for us in *Gloria in Excelsis*. And if the Prayer of Oblation is said at the Altar, we may well say the Thanksgiving Prayer before we leave the church.

Ask for pardon for wandering thoughts and shortcomings before beginning your thanksgiving. Change the form of your thanksgiving if it becomes unreal.

b. There must be thanksgiving in life, as well as by word.

The effort to resist temptations, to do the good works GOD has prepared for us to walk in, for which effort we have received grace in our Communion, may all be done as an act of thankfulness. In the same spirit too, take great care on a Communion day ; try to be quiet, calling up recollection of the gift ; sensitive to the least fault.

And so, while we never fail to make careful preparation for Communion, while we try to be more and more reverent in our reception ; let us take special care about thanksgiving. Consider what your thanksgiving is like, how you can better it. Remember we are Christophers, CHRIST-bearers, after our Communions.

LVIII

Collect for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

A help in preparation for Communion to study beforehand the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the Sunday. Out of them we are sure to get helpful thoughts, and objects for which to pray.

This Collect is one of the very full ones.

I. The Address.

"Almighty and everlasting God, . . . or deserve."

This shows us God's attitude towards the worshippers and communicants. For at the Holy Eucharist, there are two sides to the great Act. God stands ready to receive, and to give. We are present to pray, and to receive according to our desires.

a. He is always more ready to hear than we to pray. *Dan.* ix. 23.

This is true of all prayer. And the Holy Eucharist is the Church's great prayer-meeting. For it is in union with the intercession of the great High Priest in heaven.

So we have God's attitude towards our Eucharist. In His eternal Majesty, ready,

waiting; often in vain. In vain! for lack of frequent Eucharists, of earnest worshippers, of devout communicants.

Think of Almighty GOD ready to accept the great Sacrifice! yourself not ready to communicate, because of—what? perhaps not caring even to assist. It is not merely our own loss when we do not come. We keep GOD waiting for our service.

b. He gives more than either we desire or deserve.

(i) "Desire" means here, ask for; but we do not ask when we have no wish for a thing. Remember Solomon's request, and GOD's giving. 1 *Kings* iii. 9, 12-14.

We come, perhaps, desiring "to get good"; GOD gives us His Only-begotten SON! For all agree that this is the Gift received in the Sacrament.

We come with our little wants, difficulties, longings. GOD is willing, with Him, to freely give us all things. Happy is it for us that His bounty is so much greater, higher than our low aims.

> "Thou art coming to a King;
> Large petitions with thee bring."

(ii) "Deserve." Like the giving of the father to the prodigal. *S. Luke* xv. 21-23.

What do we often deserve, when we come, for our neglect, our dishonour, of Him Whom we receive? And what, Whom, does He gives us? What we never could merit, or be worthy of!

So here is God's attitude to our Eucharists, our Communions.

Everything ready for us; we often not desirous, not fit.

II. The Petition.

"Pour down upon us . . . worthy to ask."

This expresses what we need when we come.

a. First and last, mercy.

See how often the word "mercy" comes in the Liturgy; Kyrie, Prayer for the Church, "Most mercifully to accept," etc. Confession; Absolution; Prayer of Humble Access; Consecration Prayer; Prayer of Oblation; even in *Gloria in Excelsis.*

The abundance of His mercy we need, and it is ever ready for us. *Isa.* lv. 7; *Ps.* cxxx. 7.

b. This mercy shows itself in two ways.

(i) "Forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid." This we must seek and find *before* we receive.

Whereof our conscience is afraid. What is there in my daily life which ought to cause me to fear? To find out this is the great object of self-examination. Conscience, remember, is knowledge together with the Spirit of God. The light which reveals us to ourselves. That makes men say, "I heard Thy voice . . . and I was afraid"; "We are verily guilty concerning our brother"; which says to us, "Thou art the man!"

(ii) "Giving us those good things," etc.

Have already thought of what, or rather Whom, GOD gives us. Here we find why we need not fear to ask, though unworthy to do so. Through the merits and mediation of the Sacred Victim, Who is also the great High Priest.

So in Preparation say, "Have mercy upon me, O GOD, after Thy great goodness."

At Communion, remember GOD's promise, "I will betroth thee unto Me . . . in lovingkindness and in mercies." *Hos.* ii. 19.

In Thanksgiving, say, "I will praise Thy mercy betimes in the morning."

LIX

What S. John says of Communicants

1 *S. John* ii. 12-14.

So S. John wrote to Christians of his time. He boldly states certain things are true of them.

As we are communicants the words should be true of us also. It is not so with all the baptized now. But as we are trying to be true to our Christian vocation, the words ought to appeal to us to consider whether they can be truly said to us.

I. S. John is giving his reasons for writing.

a. He says almost the same things twice over.

He calls those to whom he writes by three different titles, which we need not suppose have reference to actual age.

"Little children," probably meant for all Christians. Cf. ii. 18 ; iii. 18 ; iv. 4 ; v. 21.

"Fathers," may be mature, experienced Christians.

"Young men," those in the early vigour of their conversion.

b. Three things he predicates of them, which should be equally true of us :

(i) "Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake."

Without forgiveness our Communions will be bad.

(ii) "Ye know the FATHER"; "Him which is from the beginning."

This is the knowledge which JESUS says is eternal life. *S. John* xvii. 3.

(iii) "Ye are strong, and the word of GOD abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one."

Yet we often feel as though our chief characteristic were weakness and defeat. Yet CHRIST's strength is in us.

II. These things, then, are possible for Christians, and so necessary.

a. Forgiveness.

(i) S. John says, "Your sins *are* forgiven." Do you say, "I fear not"? Then why not? See *v.* 1 ff. "If *any* man sin."

He is *your* Advocate; interceding for you; acting personally for you.

He is the Propitiation for *your* sins; He died for you.

And S. John is not writing to sinless persons, but to forgiven sinners.

(ii) So if you are not pardoned, and at peace, the fault must lie in yourself. Forgiveness is awaiting you. Believe this, and be ready to humbly accept the gift. Fulfil the conditions which the Church puts before you,

in the First Exhortation. Then the words shall be true of you: "Your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake."

b. Knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. "Ye know Him."

How can I tell whether I know God or not?

It is not the same as knowing about Him, though this may be a help towards knowing Him. It does not depend on our being clever, having much learning, etc.

The outward sign of this knowledge is obedience. ℣℣. 3-5. Knowledge and love go together, and obedience is the mark of love. *S. John* xiv. 15. Try to please Him in all things, which will involve constant speaking to Him, and you will gain the true knowledge of God, which is friendship.

Try yourself as to this obedience; without which there cannot be good Communions.

c. Strength and victory, through union with Christ. "Ye are strong," etc.

The result of Communion should be that the Word of God abides in us, and we abide in Him. But the sign of it is the imitation of Christ, ℣. 6. The great purpose of our union with Christ in this world is that we should think, speak, act, like Him. And He was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. So that he who is like Christ, through union with Him, will be able to overcome the evil one.

You say, "I am not strong!" But why not, if JESUS is in you? We forget, when we are tempted, the strength that is in us. We cannot feel this strength if we do not use it. Make trial of it, and you will find you have it.

So to sum it up.

You need pardon! Go to the Saviour, your Advocate.

You need knowledge! Try to obey Him in everything.

You need victory over evil! Then you must grow more like JESUS CHRIST.

LX

The Liturgy

The Preparation by Self-examination

In considering the Liturgy in its different parts, always remember the highest point of the Service ; viz., the Consecration and Communion. All before leads up to that.

If you had never before been taught about the Service, I should begin with that, and explain it thoroughly. Being communicants you can understand it when taken in order from the beginning. May divide the Service into three great divisions, with a motto, to help us to remember the point of each part :

I. The Preparation. "Cleanse our hearts."

II. The Canon. "Lift up your hearts!"

III. The Post-Communion. "Keep your hearts!"

Take now the first part of the Preparation, which we may call the Preparation by Self-examination.

The purpose of it seems to be to help us to remember the sins which we have already thought of.

I. The Lord's Prayer: said by the priest alone.

This seems to be part of the priest's own Preparation, "as an intercession with the FATHER, that he may be found not unworthy in the execution of his sacred office."

II. The Collect for Purity.

An English Prayer, but certainly used for eight centuries.

Contains what we may call the motto for all the first division of the Service: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts.

a. The Address to GOD.

Brings to us the thought of the All-seeing GOD. *Heb.* iv. 12 ff.

Our hearts are open to His sight, our wishes to His ear, our secrets to His knowledge. That which at the Last Day we shall find to be true, is equally true now. It is good to have this in mind when we are coming so near to GOD.

b. The Prayer.

For the purifying of our hearts by the work of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Purity of heart is always an ideal for a worshipper of God.

c. The Purpose.

That we may be able to love God better; and so in love may magnify His Name by taking rightly our part in this great act of worship; our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

III. The Commandments and the Kyrie.

This may be taken as the constant lection from the Old Testament, according to a primitive custom.

a. The Commandments should remind us of the result of our self-examination. Only by way of reminder, for our self-examination must have been done beforehand, "by the rule of God's Commandments." See *First Exhortation.* We are taught the great importance of this, for it is the one injunction of S. Paul to the careless communicants at Corinth. 1 *Cor.* xi. 28.

(The "Duty to God," and the "Duty to my neighbour" are useful helps to self-examination.)

b. The Kyrie.

For the breach of each Commandment we call upon God for mercy and forgiveness; for right inclination towards His will in this particular for the future. *Jer.* xxxi. 33.

The use of this part of the Service will

help us to a more intelligent entering into the final preparation of penitence.

So this part of our Preparation leads us to anticipate the great Judgment hereafter, by judging ourselves in our own hearts. 1 *Cor.* xi. 31. "Judge therefore yourselves, brethren," etc.

Think of the All-seeing Judge; of the sins which make us unclean in His sight.

To receive JESUS rightly here will help to make us fit to stand before Him hereafter.

LXI

The Liturgy

The Preparation by Faith

The first part of our preparation in the Communion Service is to help us to fulfil the first requirement in the Catechism: "To examine themselves whether they repent them truly," etc.

The next part is to help us to fulfil the requirements of "a lively faith."

I. The Preparation by instruction of our faith.

a. The Collect.

(i) The meaning of the word is uncertain.

The structure of the Collect, and its different parts, are well seen in the Easter Collect.

(ii) The purpose is to give us the Church's intention at the Eucharist on that day, so that we may unite with the Church in faithful prayer. It is always good to have a special intention for self, and for others. But on Sundays, etc., the Church's intention, as expressed in the Collect, should come first.

Then a great power of prayer goes up to GOD. *S. Matt.* xviii. 19.

And by the Collect the other services for the whole week are linked on to the Holy Eucharist; as the Holy Eucharist ought to be the hallowing influence on our daily life.

b. The Epistle.

The teaching of Apostles and Prophets. An instruction about doctrine or practice, to influence our faith and life.

c. The Gospel.

The teaching of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

(i) Great reverence has always been paid to the Gospel; as shown by the ritual customs about it. Always to be heard standing. "Stand up in great silence; . . . with soul and ear erect." The announcement of it received with an outburst of praise; the end marked by a thanksgiving. In the full ritual, accompanied by lights, incense, etc.

(ii) The reason for this. Because it brings our LORD Himself before us. Always something He did, said, or suffered. So it is the teaching of CHRIST by word and example; and He is the One on Whom our faith is founded.

S. Chrysostom advises all to read the Gospel through before the Sunday. And it may well supply us with food for meditation afterwards. So extending the influence of the great Service, that it may leaven our life.

d. The Creed.

The teaching of the Holy Catholic Church.

Having been instructed, we now declare our faith. An act of faith, and an act of praise.

(i) Accompanying ceremonies.

Turning to the East, to acknowledge the Day-spring from on high. Bowing the head at the holy Name. Arose through the Jews scorning it. Kneeling, or bowing, at the *Incarnatus*. An act of reverence at the mention of the great humiliation of the Incarnation. As the angels burst into song. See *S. Luke* ii. 12 ff.

Take care these actions are not merely mechanical. Accept the custom of the church you may be worshipping in.

(ii) The Creed used is the Nicene.

Drawing our attention especially to the Godhead of our LORD, and the Divine Personality of the HOLY GHOST.

II. So in this part of the Service:

a. Be mindful of the intention of the Collect, for the Church and for self.

Listen to Epistle and Gospel, and pray to accept the truths.

Join in Creed as a solemn act of faith and worship.

And all this will stir up and quicken faith.

b. This is no unimportant thing. S. Paul says, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5. It is the first thing a sick person is to be asked about. See *Visitation Office*. So the Church insists on each communicant reciting the Nicene Creed.

c. Want of this faith is a bar to good Communion. We cannot believe in the truth about the Blessed Sacrament unless, e.g., we believe in the Incarnation of the Son of God, His Atonement, etc.

So as a part of our immediate preparation the Church gives us this :

That none may draw near to the Church's highest ordinance,

Without being reminded of what he must believe ;

Without making public profession of his faith.

LXII

The Liturgy

The Preparation by Offering

After the confession of our Faith follows the exercise of our Charity; equally one of the requirements for those who come to Communion. Shown by the dedication of some of our substance to God for the use of others, and by intercession.

There is a threefold offering: alms, oblations, and prayers.

I. The Offertory.

See the Rubric, "Then shall the priest," etc., and the two after the sentences.

a. The Offertory properly is "the song of the offerers," the sentences sung during the collection of alms. These are instructions and exhortations on the duty of almsgiving.

b. The collection and offering of the alms.

The offering of our money, etc., has always been connected with the Eucharist. Even the Jews were not to appear before the Lord empty. *Deut.* xvi. 16. Our Lord supposes that all would come to the Altar with a gift.

S. Matt. v. 23 ff. Cf. *Acts* ii. 44-46. S. Paul directed each to lay by in store on the first day of the week. 1 *Cor.* xvi. 2. This was formerly made by each at the altar rails.

"Other devotions of the people" would be offerings in kind.

c. The Oblation of the Elements. See Rubric.

(i) We have to bring to GOD something for the Sacrament. As the lad gave up his loaves and fishes to our LORD. Formerly the communicants brought the bread and wine. As still in Milan Cathedral. Even now "at the charges of the parish," preserving the principle.

(ii) These are now presented to GOD by being placed upon the Altar. Always counted an important act, to be done with due reverence. In our Liturgy made silently; "Oblation is an act, not a prayer."

(iii) The mixed chalice.

Not ordered by our rubrics, but the old custom continued. Even the Privy Council, while declaring it illegal, averred that "CHRIST is supposed to have used it." The first recorded account of an Eucharist mentions it. An universal custom, though not always performed at this point in the service.

II. The Prayer for the Church. 1 *Tim.* 2. 1.

Another exercise of our charity, intercessory prayer.

a. First comes the prayer for the acceptance

of the threefold offering—alms, oblations, prayers.

b. Prayers for the living.

For unity. Rulers, etc. Bishops, etc. All GOD's people, especially the present congregation. All in trouble, etc.

Here is the time to remember special cases.

c. Commemoration of the faithful departed.

(i) This used to be a prayer, but altered in the Second Prayer Book. The word "Militant" added to the preface. The commemoration restored in 1662. The lawfulness and primitive nature of prayer for the faithful departed not denied; only its expediency in the public service.

(ii) Certainly lawful for us in private; indeed neglect of it is a practical denial of the Article, "The Communion of Saints." It is a result of natural piety; a comfort to mourners; a help to realizing the unseen world.

III. This division of the Service then brings before us:

a. The duty of offering to GOD.

Alms and oblations represent our gifts. But these are nothing unless we give ourselves to GOD. Self is the best offering; self-sacrifice the best evidence of love. *S. John* xv. 13; 1 *S. John* iii. 16. This one great object of coming to Communion: self-

dedication. Consider the unworthiness of the self you offer to God ; and prepare, by true penitence, to make it better.

b. The duty of intercession. Bring friends, and enemies, before God, at His Altar.

Two great duties, then : Offering and Intercession : Love to God and Love to man.

LXIII

The Liturgy

The Long Exhortation

Whether this is read in church or not, it may be helpful to us in our preparation.

Introduction.

Those that are in the mind to come must be careful about their self-examination. Remembering S. Paul's injunction : 1 *Cor.* xi. 28. Before we presume to eat, etc., lest when we say, " We do not presume," etc., the words be untrue.

I. Reasons why this is so needful.

a. The greatness of the benefits of Communion, which, unprepared, we miss.

(i) " Then we spiritually eat," etc.

Understand what spiritual eating means. Not unreal, imaginary, depending entirely on *our* spirit. But the Presence, the Gift, the eating, are all in the spiritual order of things.

It is far more real, more lasting, than a natural meal.

(ii) "Then we dwell in CHRIST," etc. The result of the Sacrament, rightly received, is mutual indwelling. *S. John* vi. 56.

(iii) "We are one with CHRIST," etc. The closest mutual union, beyond our understanding.

b. The greatness of the danger of wrong reception.

(i) "Then we are guilty," etc. See 1 Cor. xi. 27. We offer an indignity to the Body and Blood of CHRIST, as real, as serious, as did the Jews who crucified Him.

(ii) "We eat and drink our own damnation," etc. ℣. 29. "Damnation," of course, is, properly, "judgment"; we are judged for our sin, and shall be condemned if we do not repent. "Not considering" is the same as "not discerning"; not seeing the difference between the LORD'S Body and common bread.

(iii) "We kindle GOD'S wrath against us," etc. See 1 Cor. xi. 30.

The danger being so serious, we are warned:

II. "Judge therefore yourselves, brethren," etc.

a. See what we are told to do. Judge; by self-examination; as we judge other people; not dwelling on the commandments we have kept, but on those we have broken. Repent! Have faith! i.e., the faith which accepts GOD'S undeserved forgiveness. Amend!

And here, perhaps, is where most of us communicants fail. Be in perfect charity with all! And this needs much care and pains. Thankfulness for our redemption.

b. All this that we may "be meet partakers"; i.e., that we may come not unworthily. We cannot all be in the same state of spiritual advance. As people at a party are in different states as regards wealth. JESUS will accept what is possible in us at present, and so fitting.

III. The goodness of our Lord in giving us this Sacrament.

"And to the end," etc. The Sacrament is spoken of as:

a. Pledges of His love.

His Presence, His gift of Himself, is spiritual, invisible, hard for us to realize. Being in the body, we need something material to aid our faith. Without these outward means as pledges, we might not be able to realize when, where, He comes to us. In His compassion for our weakness He has taken away such doubtfulness. The Sacrament is a pledge of His loving help.

b. A continual remembrance of His Death.

The great Memorial is made before the FATHER. But to us, too, it is the continual reminder of His Death; His Body given, His Blood shed for us. Without His Death we should have neither forgiveness of our

sins, nor the spiritual sustenance of this Sacrament.

The natural conclusion of it all is: The duty of
Continual thankfulness;
Submission to His will;
Study how to serve Him faithfully.

What could better set before us what the life of the communicant should be?

(This Exhortation can be turned into a prayer.)

LXIV

The Liturgy

The Final Preparation of Penitence

The last part of the preparation, the final effort after complete penitence, consists of four parts : the Invitation, the Confession, the Absolution, and the Comfortable Words.

I. The Invitation.

Less stress was laid in the Service on the need of preparation by penitence when confession to a priest was compulsory. But this Invitation is like the deacon's reminder, "Draw near with godly fear, with faith and charity." This insists on :

a. Real and earnest repentance. "Ye that do truly," etc.

All our spiritual acts are apt to be vague and insincere ; our self-examination hurried over, our contrition not hearty, etc. This is not true and earnest repentance.

A Jew offering a sin offering was to lay his hands on the victim with all his might and force. So we, in seeking the benefit of

our great Sin Offering, must be in earnest, intending to lead a new life.

b. Love. "And are in love and charity," etc.

In a feast of love such as ours there is no place for dislike, hatred, or discord. If the old ceremony of the Kiss of Peace be gone, the spirit of it must remain. Remember S. Hugh of Lincoln and King Richard I. So hearts must be purified from all malice.

c. Faith. "Draw near with faith."

Every one coming must accept the doctrines of Christianity; especially the truth of the Incarnation, the Passion and Resurrection. Otherwise we cannot accept the mystery of the Body and Blood. There should be faith in the Presence of JESUS, in the Sacrament, in us. Then can we take it to our souls' comfort.

II. The General Confession.

a. To be the more carefully and earnestly joined in, because sacramental confession is not compulsory. Bring into it the sins you have remembered.

b. The most striking thing about it is the strength of the words; e.g., "The burden of them is intolerable"; causing some good people to fear to join in them. But they keep before us what we must aim at. They are put into our mouths by the Church. Make them as real as you can; hoping to improve in contrition.

III. The Absolution.

a. The right of forgiveness belongs to God only. It was delegated to the Son of Man, Who exercised it during His ministry. *S. Matt.* ix. 6, 8. He conferred the power on His Church. *S. John* xx. 23. This power is claimed by the Church, and exercised in Absolution.

b. But who may claim this general Absolution as a real pardon ? for it is sown broadcast, and the judgment of the Church is apparently not exercised.

Those surely who have fulfilled the conditions laid down in the First Exhortation : "The way and means thereto is," etc., and can come "with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience." To them it may be the Church's assurance of their pardon.

IV. The Comfortable Words.

The seal of God's Word affixed to the Church's Absolution, for the "encouragement of those who may be tempted to despair."

They set before us :

Our Lord's invitation to the troubled and weary.

His assurance of God's loving purpose for them that believe.

The acceptable saying from the chief of true penitents.

The assurance, from the disciple whom JESUS loved, of the power of His Sacrifice and Intercession.

(See *The Christian Year*: Holy Communion.)

Thus ends the preparatory part of the Service. Now we may hope that our sacrifice of praise from our lips may not be unseemly in the sight of GOD. *Ecclus.* xv. 9.

LXV

The Liturgy

The Great Thanksgiving

We come to the second and central portion of the Service. When we have exercised our Faith, Charity, Repentance, we are more ready to rise up to Thanksgiving. We are supposed to have done with sin for the present. So comes :

I. The Sursum Corda—"Lift up your hearts."

One of the oldest parts of the Service, for it is found in all Liturgies. We are to rise up in our hearts from earth to heaven.

a. In the early Church thanksgiving occupied a longer place. A recognition that all our good comes from God. Following the example of Christ, Who gave thanks before He brake the bread. The name Eucharist fits in with this. The Jewish Passover, too, was a national act of thanksgiving.

So we must take care to come in the spirit of thankfulness ; not merely seeking, but thankful that we have such a gift to seek.

Coming, not merely because we must not neglect it, but rejoicing in the gift.

b. We are more likely to do this if we cultivate a spirit of thankfulness for the lesser blessings of life, e.g., for our natural food, etc. Thanksgiving, as well as prayer, brings us help in time of need. 2 *Chron.* xx. 21 ff.; *Acts* xvi. 25 ff.

II. The Preface.

a. Gives a general reason for praising GOD. But special seasons call for special thanksgiving. So the Proper Prefaces. The Service would be richer if those removed by the Reformers could be restored: for Epiphany, Lent, feasts of the Blessed Virgin, Apostles, etc.

b. "Therefore with angels," etc.

Reminds us of the close community of worship between earth and heaven; established by the Incarnation, realized especially in the Holy Eucharist.

This thought of association is very helpful. May make the weakest feel stronger in worship. As in united intercession, it is not merely a multiplied power of prayer, but an inspiring thought to those who pray; so in worship, when bowed down by a sense of littleness and unworthiness, we may remember that our praises help to swell a great chorus; we praise with the angels, with the saints.

III. The Sanctus—"Holy, Holy, Holy," etc.

a. The hymn which Isaiah, and, long after, S. John heard in heaven. Hundreds of years between, but the song is the same. The ceaseless worship of the Eternal Trinity.

b. "Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory."

We are apt, perhaps, to look too sadly on this earth and its condition ; to angels it looks full of the glory of God. We notice the sins and their consequences ; they see the glory of God in all created things, in the lives of holy people, etc. Let each try to make his life a part of God's glory.

c. We are reminded of the great reverence needed in our worship.

Try to realize the awfulness of being allowed, sinful as we are, to join in the heavenly worship on earth. See Isa. vi. 2. and see what Isaiah felt, ℣. 5. But at his cry of abasement his lips were purified. If we are to join the angels in their song, we, too, must cry for the cleansing of our lips and hearts.

We must try to draw near to these tremendous mysteries :

With more of the reverent awe of the angels ;

With more of the conscience-stricken humility of God's Prophet.

Think over the Great Thanksgiving in your preparation. The more you realize the height of it, the more you will feel your unworthiness to join in it, the more anxious you will be to be not unfit to sing it.

LXVI

The Liturgy

The Prayer of Humble Access

Following on the great act of Thanksgiving comes a prayer of deep humility.

"The nearer we approach to these holy Mysteries, the greater reverence we ought to express." "Lest our exultations should savour of too much confidence, we now allay them with this act of humility."

See the Rubric. The priest to kneel. To say it in the name of all. In some Liturgies this prayer comes immediately before the Communion. As we have it here, we may take it as an act of humiliation before Sacrifice, as well as before Communion. Children should be taught to think of their First Communion when it is said.

I. A warning against presumption in coming.

"We do not presume," etc.

We are not so bold as to come thinking we are good enough to come. To presume on the kindness of God is surely a "presumptuous sin."

a. "Trusting in our own righteousness."

A danger, perhaps, to some who have long

been communicants. Remember we shall be judged by different standards. A danger, too, to any who do not realize the awfulness of Communion ; who look on it as an act to be done, forgetting that the *benefits* depend on *how* it is done.

b. Our only trust can be in GOD's great mercy. No human being in this world could ever be worthy, ever *deserve* to receive his GOD. But GOD's loving mercy looks on us as we are becoming ; and He gives Himself to us that we may have grace to become what He wills. This mercy can only be to penitent sinners, who are trying to walk in the right way.

c. The remedy against presumption is to know oneself. He who really knows himself will never in ignorance presume. More care about daily self-examination,—watchfulness, —recollection, will help us. What others say about us may be useful to us ; a cause of temptation to anger turned into a means of grace and self-knowledge.

II. A sense of unworthiness is the true spirit in which to approach.

" We are not worthy so much," etc. We take up the humble words of the Syrophenician woman.

a. This sense of unworthiness is not meant to hold us back from Communion. It is very different from the sense of being unforgiven. GOD's " property " is to have mercy on peni-

tent sinners ; and this sense of unworthiness is a sign of penitence.

b. It may be gained by contrasting in meditation the greatness of the Sacrament, and our own state : GOD and myself.

III. The prayer for complete purification.

"Grant us therefore," etc.

a. The form of the prayer is an acknowledgement of the Real Presence in the Sacrament. "*So* to eat the Flesh," etc. There must be, then, another way of eating the same Thing. Well may we ask, in fear and trembling, that the things that should be for our wealth may not be to us an occasion of falling.

b. It sets before us the possibility of purification so complete that we may have the perpetual indwelling of CHRIST. This is not the cleansing from the guilt, but from the effects, of sin.

(i) The body. "That our sinful bodies," etc. Throughout the Liturgy the body is not forgotten. In the words of administration. "Here we offer . . . our bodies." An echo of 1 *Thess.* v. 23 ; *Rom.* viii. 23. The human body is hallowed by the Incarnation ; our own bodies sanctified by Sacraments, "the extension of the Incarnation." The body, by its habits, sometimes makes the indwelling of CHRIST in us impossible.

Think if your body hinders you in any

way, and seek perfect power over it through the Body of CHRIST.

(ii) The soul. "And our souls washed," etc. Habits of thought, memory, imagination, self-will. How strong they are! But they can be cleansed out by the Blood of CHRIST, until we bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of CHRIST.

So in this Prayer there are three great thoughts:

1. The unworthiness of the invited guests. Take care that it be not want of preparation!

2. The long-suffering kindness of the Entertainer. Do not presume on it!

3. The heavenly power of the Food provided. So come with hopefulness; and seek definite blessings for body and soul! So shall we evermore dwell in Him, and He in us.

LXVII

The Liturgy

The Prayer of Consecration

Have come to the central point of this great Service.

Notice the Rubric.

This great prayer consists of three parts :

The Commemoration of Christ's Sacrifice.

The Invocation, and Prayer that we may be partakers of the Body and Blood of Christ.

The recitation of the Words, and performance of the Acts of Institution.

I. The commemoration of Christ's Sacrifice.

a. "God of His tender mercy gave His only Son," etc.

Reminds us how the Passion was not the act of God the Son only, but the manifestation of the love of the Eternal Trinity for the souls of sinful men.

b. "Who made there," etc. See what the Death of Christ effected.

(i) It wrought a necessary thing. It was a free-will offering of His love; but a man has a purpose in risking or laying down his life. And this was not *merely* to show His love; it was needful for the salvation of sinful men.

(ii) He made on the Cross:

A Sacrifice: one life given for the lives of others.

An Oblation: an offering of Himself, made to GOD.

A Satisfaction: a paying of something in full; satisfying the justice of GOD; for GOD's justice is as real as His mercy.

(iii) And these were:

Full: not to make atonement for one or other kind of sin; but it gathered up, and made atonement for the iniquity of us all.

Perfect: being GOD and Man, He had no infirmity, no imperfection, either by transmission or commission; even as the victim, under the Law, must be without blemish or injury.

Sufficient: not a mere heroic act of self-sacrifice, but a real propitiation for man's sin.

Such was the Sacrifice on the Cross.

c. But though complete in itself, it is not a thing of the past. That loving act of the FATHER's will is as living and deliberate an act now as then. So the Prayer goes on, "And did institute," etc. Our LORD in glory, ever presenting His human nature before the FATHER, continually pleads the One Sacrifice.

With this pleading His Church associates herself at the Altar. When we celebrate the Divine Mysteries, we look back to the Cross, and make a perpetual memory of His Sacrifice, in union with our High Priest in heaven. And so we fulfil His command, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

II. The Invocation and Prayer.

"Hear us, O merciful FATHER," etc.

Two things are needful in order that we may be partakers of CHRIST through the Sacrament.

a. That these created things of GOD may become the Body and Blood of CHRIST; a Sacrament with outward and inward part.

So it is a prayer that this may be effected. The Invocation not so clear as in some Liturgies, but implied, though not expressed.

b. That we may be communicating worthily.

For no others are "partakers of CHRIST." Those who eat and drink unworthily receive the Sacrament, but do not "eat the Flesh," etc., as in S. John vi. 54. They eat and drink to their own condemnation; are guilty of the Body and Blood, for they profane it. To come worthily, there must be:

(i) Due preparation; especially as regards repentance.

(ii) Earnest purpose as regards future life. What are you going to do *after* Communion?

III. The Words and Acts of Institution.

Now, merely remember that this is the very chief point of the Service. When the created things become the Sacrament. When that is offered to GOD as a memorial of CHRIST'S Sacrifice. After which we receive the Body and Blood.

So study, meditate on the Prayer of Consecration. Take your full part in the Act.

It is good to hear about it, to think about it ; it is better to go and worship ; best to go and receive.

Remember the words of Henry V : "I would rather go to meet my Friend, than merely to hear Him talked about."

LXVIII

The Liturgy

The Words of Institution and the Communion

Remember, in the first part of the Prayer of Consecration comes :

The Commemoration of Christ's Sacrifice ;

The Prayer that we may be partakers of Christ.

Consider now :

I. The Words and Acts of Institution.

Always considered the essential part of the Consecration. Compiled from the four Scripture accounts ; or from separate tradition.

a. The Celebrant is to do and say as Christ did.

See the Rubrics, and the Words.

This surely would be profane, did not the Church believe that Christ is the Consecrator, acting by His priest. " Christ is present at the Sacrament now, Who first instituted it. He consecrates this also ; it is not man that makes the Body and Blood of Christ by consecrating the Holy Elements, but Christ

Who was crucified for us."—*S. Chrysostom*, quoted by Luckock.

So the Celebrant claims to do what he does as representing CHRIST. And so says the words in the first person.

b. The effect of Consecration.

The same certainly as it was at that first Eucharist.

Three chief views :

(i) A presence in the heart of the receiver only.

(ii) Transubstantiation. That the substance of the elements ceases to be, and is replaced by the substance of the Body and Blood of CHRIST. This, as commonly understood, "overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament." So equally does view (i).

(iii) The doctrine of the Real Spiritual Presence. The Elements not a mere sign of the absent Body, etc. But the present Body of CHRIST, verily and indeed taken and received, after a spiritual manner, i.e., in accordance with the laws of the spiritual world. This agrees with CHRIST's words, taken literally ; and with the teaching of our Catechism.

c. What is there, we offer to GOD. "This do in remembrance of Me." Two sacrificial words here : ποιεῖτε, "celebrate" ; ἀνάμνησιν, "a memorial before GOD." *Heb.* x. 3. The Body and Blood of CHRIST put GOD in remembrance of the Death of CHRIST.

d. Our LORD being sacramentally present, adoration naturally follows. As at His Birth. As by S. Thomas after His Resur-

rection. So we sing, "Thee we adore, O hidden Saviour, Thee!"

II. The Communion.

a. Of the priest. In the absence of direction, he receives standing. Pray for the celebrant at that moment.

b. Of the people. The moment for which you have prepared is come. Go up to receive with "LORD, I am not worthy," etc.

The words of administration. In two parts. A prayer in form of a blessing; a reminder of the Death of CHRIST. Be careful in your mode of receiving.

Remember Whom you are receiving!

c. If you are not receiving, have something definite to do during the Communion of others.

Sometimes it must be sorrow because you must abstain from Communion.

Prayer about your next Communion. Intercession. Use a book if you need it; but know what you mean to do, and it may be a most helpful time.

Take, then, your double part in this great Act. Exercise your priesthood, as a member of CHRIST, by joining in the great memorial of CHRIST's Death.

Take care that your reception of this great means of grace be in such a way as to bring you what it is meant to bring—the benefits of union with your LORD.

LXIX

The Liturgy

The Lord's Prayer, and Prayer of Oblation

Now begins the third division of the Service—the Post-Communion. Notice the Rubric : "When all have communicated," etc. The reverence due to the sacred Elements is marked plainly. The Presence on the Altar gives significance to much that is said in this last part of the Service.

I. The Lord's Prayer.

"S. Jerome has told us that our Blessed Lord taught this Prayer to the Apostles, that believers might use it 'daily in the Sacrifice of His Body.'" At any rate, this Prayer is as constant in the Liturgies as the *Sursum Corda* and the Words of Institution.

a. Its place in the Liturgy.

It has the place of honour in every Service : Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony, etc. So used to be between Consecration and Communion. But the Church of England seems to hold that the great act is not complete until the Sacrifice has been partaken of.

The petition for daily bread might seem more significant before Communion ; yet not without meaning to those who have just received.

b. It is said all together.

The family prayer of the Household of GOD, united by Communion to their FATHER ; to their Mother, the Church ; and to each other individually. Think of each petition in this sense.

c. The Doxology is added, because thanksgiving is the keynote of the last part of the Service.

II. The Prayer of Oblation.

It is naturally felt that the old position of this prayer, immediately after the Consecration, was much better. But "the oblation does not depend upon the use of any form of words." "The simple *action* of the Church in obedience to the command is the sufficient and perfect memorial of the Sacrifice on the Cross." And while the Blessed Sacrament is still on the Altar, we plead for an acceptance of our Offering.

a. We ask that GOD may accept our Eucharist. And that we may receive the full benefits of CHRIST'S Passion.

Do not forget the significance of the words, "All Thy whole Church," including the faithful departed. Though they need not remission of their sins, there are other benefits of His Passion for them as well as for us.

b. There is another offering, without which the

pleading of CHRIST's death will not profit the individual: the offering of self. Fitting that GOD should ask this of us, when GOD the SON offered His life wholly for us.

It is a living Sacrifice He asks. No dead creature, incense, flour, etc., but our lives.

A holy sacrifice; for he who offers himself has been made a member of CHRIST, a temple of the HOLY GHOST.

A reasonable sacrifice; offered of our own free will.

And it is ourselves, our souls and bodies. Our minds and our wills to be used for GOD. Our bodies for sickness or health, for active work, or passive suffering. *Rom.* xii. 1.

c. Then, with a sense of the unworthiness of those who offer, we ask that it may be accepted, not according to our merits, but according to the mercy which is ready to pardon our offences.

So the spirit of him who has made his Communion should be humble self-oblation; which he trusts may be accepted for the sake of Him Who is the perfect Offerer and the perfect Offering.

(For the alternative Thanksgiving, see Address X.)

LXX

The Liturgy

The Gloria in Excelsis, and the Blessing

"When they had sung an hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

We have come to the final hymn.

The last act of Jesus before He passed from His disciples' sight was to lift up His hands and bless them. So here He blesses us through His priest.

I. The Gloria in Excelsis.

a. Position in the Service. Formerly at the beginning. Is so now in the Roman Liturgy. But certainly has a fitness at the end of the great act.

The angelic hymn of praise at the Nativity of Christ has a special meaning, when He has come so near to us in humility. The angels sang praise when the Godhead was hidden in that little Child wrapped in swaddling-clothes. So we, when our Lord and our God has been hidden under the outward forms of bread and wine.

b. Form and meaning.

(i) A great outburst of praise, in which the communicant may pour forth his gratitude for all blessings, specially for his Communion. GOD's great glory is shown in the Incarnation, of which Communion is one of the results.

(ii) Prayer to the Second Person as the Lamb of GOD. "That the outburst of praise, . . . is followed immediately by confession of sin and prayer is a marked characteristic of Christian worship." Like the Prayer of Humble Access immediately after the *Sanctus*. Should encourage in us the spirit of holy fear.

(iii) But the last thought in it is not of our weakness but of GOD's greatness. For it ends in praise of the Eternal Three in One through JESUS CHRIST.

So having poured out our hearts in praise, we await

II. The Peace and Blessing.

To be given by the Bishop if he be present.

a. The meaning of a blessing.

Not a mere prayer, but an act with authority. Shown by the fact that not all ministers have authority to bless. It conveys what the spoken words imply. A priestly function, inherited from Jewish times. *Lev.* ix. 22 ; *Num.* vi. 23, etc. ; *S. Luke* i. 21. The raising of the hand is the outward sign.

S. Luke xxiv. 50. Various Councils of the Church forbid men to leave before the Blessing has been given.

b. "The Peace of GOD." *Phil.* iv. 7.

(i) This invoking of GOD's peace on us is most fitting at the close of the Eucharist. It was after the Institution that CHRIST said, "Peace I leave with you," etc. Not worldly peace; but His peace, which passeth all understanding. The peace invoked is that which is the result of close union with Him Whose peace it is; and our Communion has given us this union.

Notice what condition S. Paul gives of our having this peace. *Phil.* iv. 6. We have just joined in the highest act of prayer with thanksgiving.

(ii) This peace shall keep our hearts and minds.

This is what our hearts need at the end. First, cleansing; then, uplifting; now, guarding and keeping. And GOD's peace will uphold us against insults, against cares; where that is fully present, nothing can wound.

c. "The Blessing of God Almighty," etc.

May remind us of our Baptismal obligations; of the power of the Three in One, which enables us to keep them.

So may we depart in peace, strengthened with the Bread of Life; ready to fight against any temptation that the devil prepares for us; and when are they so likely to come? and when have

we more strength to enable us to resist them? ready to do the good works GOD prepares for us to walk in; hopeful of persevering in the strength of that Meat until we come to the Mount of GOD.

Oxford:
Printed by A. R. Mowbray & Co. Limited

265.343Q
Lethbridge, Arthur. L568
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